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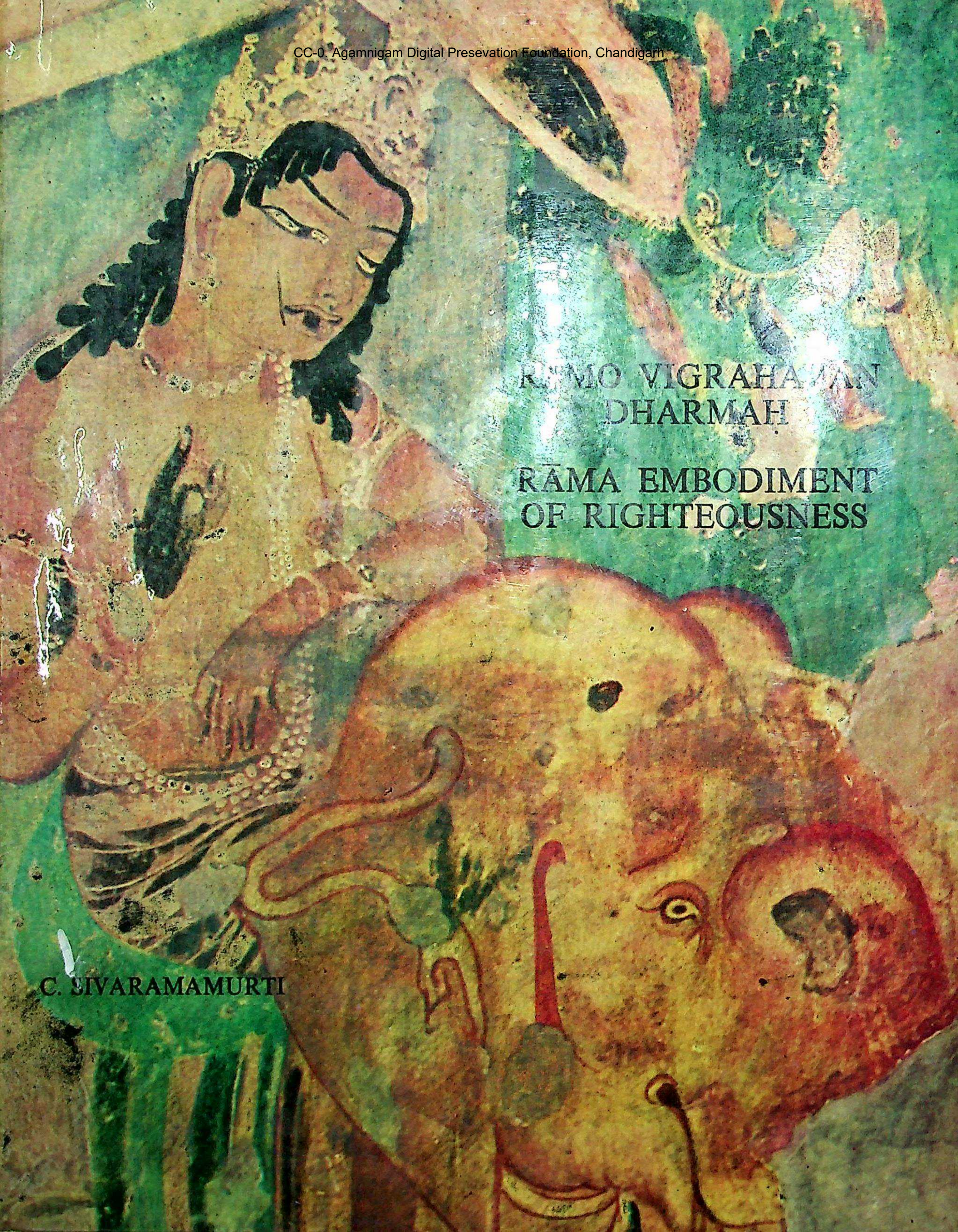

RAMO VIGRAHAVAN DHARMAH

RĀMA EMBODIMENT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

C. SIVARAMAMURTI

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RĀMO VIGRAHAVĀN DHARMAH: RĀMA EMBODIMENT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

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Frontispiece:

Rāma enthroned, Kāngrā School, early 19th century A.D., National Museum.

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RĀMO VIGRAHAVĀN DHARMAḤ: RĀMA EMBODIMENT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

C. ŚIVARAMAMŪRTI

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Affectionately to the memory of
The Rt. Hon'ble V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C., C.H., LL.D.,
the world-renowned silver-tongued orator
who sang the glory of Rāma

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FOREWORD

I consider it a great privilege and indeed a unique honour to be asked to write a Foreword to any of the works of this most distinguished scholar of our ancient history and culture. In fact all his works are veritable treasures on Indology, placing posterity in a deep debt that can neither be forgotten nor ever cancelled.

Born of a family of Vedic scholars who by custom and heritage were devotees of Rāma, it is noteworthy that Dr. Sivaramamurti's father had composed a charming *kāvya* poem, *Sundararāmāyaṇa* on the glory of the ideal Prince Rāma. It was therefore expected of Dr. Sivaramamurti to one day produce some outstanding literature on his family Deity Rāma and I can understand his feeling in asking me to write this foreword, as Rāma is also my family Deity. The learned author had delivered a series of lectures at the L.D. Institute of Indology at Ahmedabad on Rāmo Vigrahavān Dharmaḥ: Rāma Embodiment of Righteousness, and these lectures have now been published in the form of an exceedingly valuable book.

Rāma has ever been the exemplar of all that has been cherished in India as ideals in life since our ancient scriptures have always held man's character (*chāritra*) as above every other factor. Among the *purushārthas*, as Rāma himself has pointed out to Bharata, no one can overlook the importance of the others, while all of them should be guided by the true principles of *dharma*. Dr. Sivaramamurti has in all his books always stressed the study of literature and art, holding that one is a commentary to the better understanding of the other. In this book he has not only enlivened visually by a number

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of specially chosen illustrations from sculpture, painting, numismatics and epigraphy the text that he has pointedly quoted, stressed and elaborated, but has, in addition, drawn attention to the interesting versions of several poets that have elaborated, deviated or given new colour to many a passage of Vālmīki. Thus, for example, Kālidāsa, Kumāradāsa, Bhavabhuti, Bāṇa, Murāri, Kshemendra, Rājaśekhara, and a host of others that have given new dimensions to Vālmīki's immortal epic, have been freely cited which heightens the intrinsic value of this unique academic study. Dr. Sivaramamurti, while approaching the theme with devotion, has objectively assessed the glory of Rāma, showing how the highest ennobled mortal rises to the eminence of the greatest of celestials, Purushottama.

I have no doubt this book will be received as an acquisition by the religious minded, an asset by the academician and of absorbing interest by the general reader.

6 Akbar Road
New Delhi
January 22, Vasant Panchmi 1980

Nagendra Singh

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

At the invitation of Dr. N.J. Shah, Director of the L.D. Institute of Indology at Ahmedabad, I delivered a series of lectures on the theme *'Rāmo Vigrahavān Dharmaḥ'*—Ramā Embodiment of Righteousness, on 27th, 28th and 29th November 1978. With the kind permission of the Institute, the text of these lectures is now published with suitable illustrations.

Rāma has ever been the ideal and the supreme illustration of exemplary character. In India, where the highest store was laid on ethical values in the conduct and behaviour of man, in both the closer circle of kith and kin and the larger sphere of society and the world itself, the illustrious prince of Ayodhyā has been the beacon light to illumine the right path of virtue.

The ancient rulers of India had specially arranged for the exposition of the quintessence of the wisdom of the epics to a large and eager audience of listeners in the *Vyākhyāna maṇḍapa*, pillared hall of exposition, in every village, that provided auditory education, the simplicity of which was matched only by its excellence, and which bore fruit in promoting not only knowledge but also in building up character that made India a great nation of sacrifice, action and ideals.

This short study of Rāma's essential noble qualities, *kalyāṇaguṇas*, is offered at His feet as a posy of flowers in grateful remembrance for showing the path of how to live.

For the photographs illustrating the book, I am thankful to the

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Archaeological Survey of India, the National Museum, the Madras Government Museum and the Archaeological Department of Andhra Pradesh. To the Archaeological Survey of India, the National Museum and the Andhra Pradesh Lalit Kala Academi, I am beholden for their kind loan of colour blocks that have given a special charm to the book. To Mr. B.S. Bhatt, Guide Lecturer in the National Museum, my thanks are due for kindly preparing the Index. To the L.D. Institute of Indology, I am grateful for the kind accord of permission to publish the book. To Mr. Baxi of Kanak Publications, the Publisher, and to Mr. Chhoteylal Jain of Navchetan Press, the Printer, I am beholden for expedition and the tasteful production of the book. I have no words to adequately express my gratitude to Dr. Nagendra Singh, Vice President and Judge of the International Court of Justice at The Hague, for so graciously bejewelling the book with his enlivening foreword.

New Delhi
January, 1980

C. Sivaramamurti

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Rāmo Vigrahavān Dharmaḥ: Rāma Embodiment of Righteousness

Dharma was considered the highest principle in India and it is under the shade of *dharma* as a *chhāyāvṛiksha*, that life on earth itself was to have its peaceful tenor. *Dharma* is the most beloved, *vatsala,* and so we have the apellation *dharmavatsala* for those who love and follow *dharma* assiduously. *Dharma* is likened to honey itself as it is so sweet. The *Bṛihadāraṇyakopanishad* describes *dharma* as honey for all beings even as all beings are like honey for *dharma.* The shining immortal *purusha* in *dharma* and the *dharma* itself within oneself, shining and immortal, is the *purusha* of individual self, as this very *dharma* is the self, is the immortal, is *brahman* and is in fact all:

अयं धर्मः सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु ।
अस्य धर्मस्य सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु ।।
यश्चायं अस्मिन् धर्मे तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषः ।
यश्चायं अध्यात्मं धर्मः ।।
तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषः । अयमेव स योऽयं आत्मा ।
इदममृतम् । इदं ब्रह्म इदं सर्वम् ।।

Bṛihadāraṇyakopanishad 2, 5, 11

In the *Mahānārāyaṇopanishad*, it is given that righteousness is the glory and mainstay of the universe. In this world people approach the righteous one. By righteousness sin is got rid of. In righteousness everything is established. Hence, righteousness is considered the highest:

धर्मो विश्वस्य जगतः प्रतिष्ठा ।
लोके धर्मिष्ठं प्रजा उपसर्पन्ति ।
धर्मेण पापमपनुदति । धर्मे सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
तस्माद्धर्मं परमं वदन्ति ।।

Mahānārāyaṇopanishad 79, 7

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When Yudhishṭhira is questioned by *dharma*, he replies that he would never act disastrously towards *dharma*. On the contrary, he would take the utmost care to protect it as *dharma* protects. *Dharma*, taken care of, protects, and, transgressed or assassinated, destroys:

धर्म एव हतो हन्ति धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः ।
तस्माद्धर्मं न त्यजामि मा नो धर्मो हतो वधीत् ॥

Mahābhārata 3, 313, 128

This line *dharmo rakshati rakshitaḥ* appears as a motto engraved on the seal of a royal official of the Gupta period which was discovered at Basarh, ancient Vaiśālī, during the excavations there about seventy years ago (Fig. 1). One of the most fervent appeals in the tenth century A.D. for the resuscitation of *dharma* that was already getting eroded fast, is found in a passage in the second chapter of the *Kusamāñjali* where the deterioration of the highest standards of virtue and moral code and its continued attenuation is graphically presented. Towards the end of his long and effective peroration, Udayana gives a picture of *dharma* as a bull or a cow, originally fourfooted, now limping along in great agony on a single foot. Formerly *dharma* was firmly resting on its four legs. Slowly, as *dharma* deteriorated and got weakened by the attenuated power of penance, it had only three legs to rest on, and when bright philosophic thought and discernment (*jñāna*) withered, *dharma* rested in great pain only on two feet, but now with the attenuated sacrificial activity (*yajña*) *dharma* stands on a single leg, purely by the power of *dāna* or the spirit of giving away. Even this foot, being affected by a footsore as it were, resulting in such forbidden activities as the game of dice, drink etc. disfigured by the dirt of lack of faith, pierced by a thousand thorns in the shape of lust, greed, anger, etc., and with its vitality sapped slowly day by day, is unable to stand on this feeble leg, stumbles here and there and almost appears to fall:

पूर्वं चतुष्पाद्धर्म आसीत् ।
ततस्तनूयमाने तपसि त्रिपात् । ततो म्लायति ज्ञाने द्विपात् ।
संप्रति जीर्यति यज्ञे दानैकपात्। सोऽपि पादो दुरागतादिविपादिकाशतदूषितोऽश्रद्धामलकलङ्कितः
कामक्रोधादिकण्टकशतजर्जरः प्रत्यहमपचीयमानवीर्यतया इतस्ततः स्खलन्निवोपलभ्यते ॥

Nyāyakusumāñjali 2, 3

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This fervent appeal by Udayana shows, in the light of this seal, the highest place of honour given to *dharma* in private and public life and upheld as the greatest protector. Kings had made provision in ancient India, as we learn from inscriptions, for the reading and exposition of important portions of the great epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, that have built up the character of a great nation during the centuries that have run into millennia. Portions like the *anuśāsanaparva* from the *Mahābhārata*, where Bhīshma expounded the highest principles of ethical life, *sanatasujātīya* and *viduranīti* of the *udyogaparva*, *yakshapraśna* of the *vanaparva*, and several other such portions expounding *dharma* from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, have constituted the main beacons of education in ancient India that believed in *śruta*, learning by hearing rather than by mere study. The sculptors and painters vied one with the other in depicting episodes illustrating the highest ethical values in life as sources of inspiration for life itself. Such representations had great effect on the people, as it is emulative spirit that provoked people to act like the *uttamapurusha* or those of the highest character. Kṛishṇa has given in the *Gītā* that the common folk could always follow the example of the highest and the most righteous as the standard set to be followed:

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

Bhagavadgītā 3, 21

A visitor to Udayagiri in Bhilsa, ancient Vidiśā, cannot but be struck by a look at the monument of the earliest antiquity in that region, the Garuḍa column of Heliodoros which has an inscription that mentions how it was erected for Vāsudeva, the god of gods, by a Greek from Taxila, son of Dion, a *Bhāgavata*, devotee of Vishṇu, who had come as an ambassador from the great king Antialkidas to Kāśīputra Bhāgabhadra, king of the region (Fig. 2). Apart from the interest in this inscription as revealing the faith of a Greek in the *Bhāgavata* cult and his creation of a pillar (Fig. 3), there is yet another important eye-opener to understanding the mind of the individual in ancient India that was turned towards *dharma*, in what is seen in a small inscription on the same pillar. This inscription mentions three immortal precepts as self restraint, sacrifice and alertness which when practised lead to heaven (Fig. 4):

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त्रीणि अमुतपदानि सुअनुठितानि नयन्ति स्वग दम चाग अप्रमाद ।

Rapson's *Ancient India*, p. 157

The verse forming the source of this is interesting. It is the discourse of Sanatsujāta, the learned young sage, who impresses on Dhṛitarāshṭra that *dama*, *tyāga* and *apramāda* are the receptacle of immortality as the wise seers know them emanating from truth that procedes them all:

दमस्त्यागोऽप्रमादश्च एतेष्वमृतमाहितम् ।
तानि सत्यमुखान्याहुर्ब्राह्मणा ये मनीषिणः ॥

Mahābhārata 5, 48, 14

The pillar itself being as early as the beginning of the second century B.C., the text of the *Mahābhārata* even then so revered and quoted is indeed most hoary.

The subjects of Dilīpa never swerved even a hair's breadth from the path trodden from the time of Manu himself, just as the wheel of a chariot does not move out of its beaten path when controlled by a wise charioteer. So Dilīpa was the wise upholder of the laws of Manu:

रेखामात्रमपि क्षुण्णादामनोर्वर्त्मनः परम् ।
न व्यतीयुः प्रजास्तस्य नियन्तुर्नेमिवृत्तयः ॥

Raghuvamśa 1, 17

Raghu being the great progenitor of the race, *vamśasya kartā*, was so righteous that Kautsa, the young Brāhmaṇa who had come to beg of him the impossible fee for his teacher in gold, felt that it was indeed no wonder that the earth gave of her all for a ruler who stood for righteousness, but it baffled him indeed to find that his power was so great that even the heavens would yield him any desire of his (Fig. 5):

किमत्र चित्रं यदि कामसूर्भूवृ॑त्ते स्थितस्याधिपतेः प्रजानाम् ।
अचिन्तनीयस्तु तव प्रभावो मनीषितं द्यौरपि येन दुग्धा ॥

Raghuvamśa 5, 33

In describing Atithi, the son of Kuśa, who came to the throne

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as a young boy, his glorious qualities of *dharma* are recounted. His very appearance made his people feel at home with him, and he was so lovable, with his face bright with lustre, wreathed in smiles as he spoke lovingly, that all those who depended on him like his subjects, felt that he was the very personification of confidence:

प्रसन्नमुखरागं तं स्मितपूर्वाभिभाषिणम् ।
मूर्तिमन्तममन्यन्त विश्वासमनुजीविनः ॥

Raghuvaṁśa 17, 31

This is exactly like the picture of Rāma given by Vālmīki (Fig. 6). As a king, he would not leave any cases to be looked into by others, however much they were qualified for judgement, but would himself personally consider them, and, being the friend of the righteous, vigilently looked into the pleas of both the complainant and the complained against, and that circumspection resolved even those of most doubtful nature requiring careful analysis:

स धर्मस्थसखः शश्वदर्थिप्रत्यर्थिनां स्वयम् ।
ददर्श संशयच्छेद्यान् व्यवहारानतन्द्रितः ॥

Raghuvaṁśa 17, 39

He was so devoted to *dharma*, that the rest of the *purushārthas* were determined in terms of *dharma*, but yet he would not mitigate the importance of any of the three. He did not violate *dharma* by stressing *artha* or *kāma*. Nor were the latter two mitigated for the sake of *dharma* itself. He did not either overlook wealth in preference to desire nor desire in preference to wealth. He was thus equal in his evaluation of all the three:

न धर्ममर्थकामाभ्यां बबाध न च तेन तौ ।
नार्थं कामेन कामं वा सोऽर्थेन सदृशस्त्रिषु ॥

Raghuvaṁśa 17, 57

When Rāma was leaving for the forest, Kausalyā though greatly overcome by grief, was sure that Rāma would be protected by the very *dharma* that he so assiduously guarded. In blessing her son, she called on *dharma*, so punctiliously protected by him with

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attuned mind and careful insight into the nuances of its observance, to protect him:

यं पालयसि धर्मं त्वं धृत्या च नियमेन च ।
स वै राघवशार्दूल धर्मस्त्वामभिरक्षतु ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 25, 3

It may be recalled that Dushyanta who suddenly falls in love with the charming girl of the hermitage, Śakuntalā, wonders whether he is right in so allowing his mind to lovingly think of her, if she were not his compeer for bridal relationship. His doubt is whether, if she were the daughter of Kaṇva, it would not be sinful for him as a Kshatriya to think of her as his wife to be, but somehow immediately conscious of being tbe *dharmika* king that he is, he has such self confidence that he justifies his thought by obseving that unless she was such as could be won by a Kshatriya his mind attuned to *dharma* would not have even thought of her:

असंशयं क्षत्रपरिग्रहक्षमा यदार्यमस्यामभिलाषि मे मनः ।

Abhijñānaśākuntalam 1, 19

Kuśa, the worthy son of Rāma, roused from his couch at midnight, with the lights bright and still, by the sudden appearance of a damsel, never before seen by him, but in attire appearing like one with husband far away and separated, and addressed by her with hands brought together in reverence with a hail for his victory while greeting him, and excited by wonder as his chamber was still unbolted, making her presence as mysterious as the sudden appearance of an image in a mirror, questions her, 'O auspicious one! who are you? and whose wife? How have you entered the door still unbolted though I cannot see any supernatural powers in you? Tell me this, but do bear in mind that the progeny of the self-restrained Raghus is ever totally turned away from the women-folk of others':

का त्वं शुभे कस्य परिग्रहो वा किं वा मदभ्यागमकारणं ते ।
आचक्ष्व मत्वा वशिनां रघूणां मनः परस्त्रीविमुखप्रवृत्ति ॥

Raghuvaṁśa 16, 8

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But ultimately it happened to be the goddess of Ayodhyā, who, when Rāma with all his beloved people of Ayodhyā entered Sarayū, was left deserted and forlorn, and personally came to call back to Ayodhyā the lord of Ayodhyā, Kuśa, to whom she was like a consort even like Rājyaśrī. This is to illustrate the mind of the prince that was so meticulous in following the *dharma*, *parastrīvîmukhatva.* It is this, in which, about Rāma, Sītā has the greatest confidence. In fact, when she strangely enough reminds Rāma of three things that she had learnt from him, *tvatta eva śrutam mayā*, she advises Rāma to desist from killing even demons unprovoked. She mentions the three evils born of passion, falsehood, passion for women other than one's own and cruelty without provocation:

त्रीण्येव व्यसनान्यत्र कामजानि भवन्त्युत ।
मिथ्यावाक्यं परमकं तस्माद्गुरुतरावुभौ ॥
परदाराभिगमनं विना वैरं च रौद्रता ।
मिथ्यावाक्यं न ते भूतं न भविष्यति राघव ॥
कुतोऽभिलषणं स्त्रीणां परेषां धर्मनाशनम् ।
तव नास्ति मनुष्येन्द्र न चाभूत्ते कदाचन ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 10, 3-5

Sītā is so confident about Rāma's *ekapatnīvratatva* that her remark is:

कुतोऽभिलषणं स्त्रीणां परेषां धर्मनाशनम् ।
तव नास्ति मनुष्येन्द्र न चाभूत्ते कदाचन ॥

It had never been and could never be the trait in Rāma that he would even have a glance at a woman other than Sītā. It is no wonder that Kuśa, born of that parentage, has the same trait and warns the woman before him, that he could help her in anything, but only if she was come with no evil intent towards his attitude to any woman.

We know that Gautama won Ahalyā as his wife in divine appreciation of his steadfastness of mind which could not be moved even by the fabulous paragon of beauty that Ahalyā was. She was specially created with fascinating physical charm and left alone

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in his charge and in his hermitage, and yet the sage would not so much as even glance at her, least of all be emotionally stirred by her beauty:

यद्यत्प्रजानां प्रत्यङ्गं विशिष्टं तत्तदुद्धृतम् ।
ततो मया रूपगुणैरहल्या स्त्री विनिर्मिता ॥
हलं नामेह वैरूप्यं हल्यं तत्प्रभवं भवेत् ।
यस्मान्न विद्यते हल्यं तेनाहल्येति विश्रुता ॥
अहल्येति मया शक्र तस्या नाम प्रवर्तितम् ।
निर्मितायां च देवेन्द्र तस्यां नार्यां सुरर्षभ ॥
स्थानाधिकतया पत्नी ममैषेति पुरन्दर ।
सा मया न्यासभूता तु गौतमस्य महात्मनः ॥
न्यस्ता बहूनि वर्षाणि तेन निर्यातिता च सा ।
ततस्तस्य परिज्ञाय मया स्थैर्यं महात्मनः ॥
ज्ञात्वा तपसि सिद्धं च पत्न्यर्थं स्पर्शिता तदा ।
स तया सह धर्मात्मा रमते स्म महमुनिः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 30, 23-30

Viśvāmitra was to Rāma very much more than a master, and so he would implicitly obey the sage, with the full confidence that what he felt as *dharma* was really to him also *dharma*, especially as his father had completely put him in his charge.

प्रमाणं सर्वधर्माणां निश्चये भवतां वचः ।
अहं हि भगवन् पित्रा नियुक्तस्तव शासने ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 1, 41

This very Viśvāmitra, who attained the impossible position of *brahmaṛishi* by his penance, could only reach that eminence after so many obstacles that disturbed his penance every time by the lure of a nymph of extraordinary charm like Menakā or Rambhā, and every time he had to withdraw himself from this snare only after he had been ensnared, and it was thus his achievement only after considerable loss of time. It is in this, the highest control of self and sensory organs, that Rāma is singled out as the greatest among the *vaśīs*, *vaśinām uttamaḥ*.

Sītā, in upbraiding Rāvaṇa, accuses him as outrageous, *nikṛita-prajña*. She tells him that one who was not satisfied with his

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womenfolk and with his mind fickle and wandering and deluded with base intent would court grief and disaster at the hands of the womenfolk of others by his contemptible passionate approach:

अतुष्टं स्वेषु दारेषु चपलं चलितेन्द्रियम् ।
नयन्ति निकृतिप्रज्ञं परदाराः पराभवम् ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 5, 21, 8-9

On the other hand, Rāma's character is such that he would even forgive the thief that stole his wife. When Vibhīshaṇa seeks his protection, Rāma assures the monkeys that he would certainly grant protection, to Vibhīshaṇa, and even if it were Rāvaṇa himself, the base pilferer of his wife, he would yet grant him protection. That is the magnanimous and *dhārmik* spirit of Rāma whose power was ever for protecting the weak, having no malice even towards his worst enemy. Here is Rāma's great admonition to the monkeys. It is a great evil desisting from protecting those seeking refuge. It is unworthy of heaven, defamatory and the annihilator of all might and power. I shall follow the precept of sage Kaṇḍu, so that the fruit of my act would be in accordance with righteous conduct, worthy of fame and heaven. To one who even once seeks refuge and beseeches pronouncing himself as mine, for all beings whoever they be, I grant assurance of protection to fear from none. Bring him along. I have already given him protection whether it is Vibhīshaṇa or even if he were Rāvaṇa himself in person (Fig. 7):

एवं दोषो महानत्र प्रपन्नानामरक्षणे ।
अस्वर्ग्यं चायशस्यं च बलवीर्यविनाशनम् ::
करिष्याभि यथार्थं तु कण्डोर्वचनमुत्तमम् ।
धर्मिष्ठं च यशस्यं च स्वर्ग्यं स्यात्तु फलोदयम् ।।
सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते ।
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद्व्रतं मम ।।
आनयैनं हरिश्रेष्ठ दत्तमस्याभयं मया ।
विभीषणो वा सुग्रीव यदि वा रावणः स्वयम् ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 18, 31-35

This is one of the most thrilling utterances of Rāma entirely swayed only by principles of *dharma*, completely free from any malice even towards one who robbed him of his dearest sweetheart,

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seperation from whom was worse than lingering death for him; but for Rāma *dharma* was more important. He assures Sītā that having given word of protection to the sages in the forest, he would not only give up his own life but even Sītā herself, whom he loved more than his life, and even Lakshmaṇa he would sacrifice if it came to that, but he would never swerve from his word assuring protection to the sages (Fig. 8 and 9):

अप्यहं जीवितं जह्यां त्वां वा सीते सलक्ष्मणाम् ।
न तु वाक्यं प्रतिश्रुत्य ब्राह्मणानां विशेषतः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 10, 19

Hanumān is one of the best judges of people and being the most intelligent, he could always analyse even the fine shade, and moods of emotions and attribute them to their immediate principal cause (Fig. 10). That is why he could appreciate the great temperament of *dharma* in Sītā and assess her accordingly. On two occasions, Hanumān has specially commended Sītā as the most worthy of Rāma, as no one else but she the *dhārmik* wife of Rāma could think or express so. That is his wonder and appreciation every time. As a measure of safety, so that nothing could be left to chance, and, having met her, Hanumān innocently and with the best of intentions suggests that he would carry her away to Rāma. It is here that Sītā reveals in her reply to Hanumān what a great and noble personality she is (Fig. 11 and 12). Anyone else in such a plight could have welcomed escape, but Sītā was not anxious for any such escape out of her almost insurmountable difficulty. Sītā tells him that she was fully aware of his might and strength, his speed, comparable only to that of the wind, and lustre as of fire, all wondrous indeed, since no ordinary person could have crossed the ocean with ease and met her. She was quite conscious of his power to carry her also to Rāma but she felt it was improper, and gives the reasons. The first few were such as could probably be even overcome, but the final clinching one was the principal cause of her negating the offer. His speed would sure make her faint and from dizzy heights she could fall into the ocean and become feed of the whales and crocodiles. She could create the doubt that she was his consort. She could be pursued by demons of immense valour set by Rāvaṇa, and he could be fought by

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armed warriors, himself unarmed. There could be no certainty of success either. Even while fighting, she could, by the tumultuous action, fall from his shoulder and they could carry her back as she fell; and all his great effort would probably go in vain. But above all, even granting that he could overcome all the demons, Rāma's fame and self respect would be tarnished by Hanumān fighting the *rākshasas*. The *rākshasas* could hide her somewhere where Rāma may not find her. The very life of Rāma was centred in her and the entire family would perish if he perished. But more than all this, because of her devotion to her lord, she would not touch the body of any other man, whoever it be, though, however, such touch by Rāvaṇa was as she was helpless and unable to resist and protect herself being forcibly abducted (Fig. 13 and 14). If Rāma punished Rāvaṇa by annihilating his entire family and regained her, that would be worthy of him. On this Hanumān being overjoyed at such a reply remarks, 'you have spoken well O auspicious one! not only is this in tune with feminine grace but also with that of the amiable, disciplined one that you are. A woman, frail by nature, cannot, as you say, crosss the ocean, a hundred leagues in length. But the second reason given by you that you would not touch any other than Rāma is indeed befitting the wife of so great and saintly a person as Rāma. Who else but you would have made such a statement? Surely the scion of the Kakutstha family (Rāma) would be informed of this as well as your action and speech in its entirety. I had, however, suggested this only because I wanted to do what could make Rāma happy, my mind moist with affection and with no other intent:

ततः स कपिशार्दूलस्तेन वाक्येन हर्षितः ।
सीतामुवाच तच्छ्रुत्वा वाक्यं वाक्यविशारदः ॥
युक्तरुपं त्वया देवि भाषितं शुभदर्शने ।
सदृशं स्त्रीस्वभावस्य साध्वीनां निनयस्य च ॥
स्त्रीत्वान्न त्वं समर्थासि सागरं व्यतिवर्तितुम् ।
मामधिष्ठाय विस्तीर्णं शतयोजनमायतम् ॥
द्वितीयं कारणं यच्च ब्रवीषि विनयान्विते ।
रामादन्यस्य नार्हामि संस्पर्शमिति जानकि ।
एतत्ते देवि सदृशं पत्न्यास्तस्य महात्मनः ।
का ह्यान्या त्वामृते देवि ब्रूयाद्वचनमीदृशम् ॥

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श्रीष्यते चैव काकुत्स्थः सर्वं निवशेषतः ।
चेष्टितं यत्त्वया देवि भाषितं च ममाग्रतः ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 5, 38, 1-6

A second occasion when Hanumān appreciates Sītā is when she forbids his punishing the *rākshasīs* demonesses that were so cruel to her as they guarded her on the orders of Rāvaṇa in the Aśoka grove. Hanumān not only gives glad tidings of Rāma's victory to Sītā, having come specially to convey her this news, but he also expresses his desire to punish the wicked demonesses by torturing and tormenting them as they deserved. But Sītā, reputed for her ethical attitude, replies in thought couched in *dharma*. These demonesses had been acting on the orders of their king, completely controlled by him, having no volition of their own. Who could be angry with servants who have always to obey orders? Owing to some ill luck, probably for some misdeeds of mine in an earlier birth, I have suffered all this while, enjoying the fruit of it as was ordained for me. It is only on the orders of Rāvaṇa that they threatened me all the while (Fig. 15), and now that Rāvaṇa is no more they would desist from indulging in it any more. No one could partake of the sin of the evil committed by another. People with character should take note of this and act accordingly. Sinners or saints or even those that merit capital punishment should always be treated with compassion. There is no one in this world that has not erred. *Rākshasas*, who could assume form according to their wish and derive pleasure in tormenting, cannot be accused of doing any wrong even when they commit sin. Hanumān listens to this and again befittingly replies Sītā the worthy wife of Rāma. Hanumān exclaims that she is the befitting *dharmapatnī* of Rāma famed for her *dhārmik* thought:

एवमुक्ता हनुमता वैदेही जनकात्मजा ।
उवाच धर्मसहितं हनुमन्तं यशस्विनी ।।
राजसंश्रयवश्यानां कुर्वतीनां पराज्ञया ।
विधेयानां च दासीनां कः कुप्याद्वानरोत्तम ।।
भाग्यवैषम्ययोगेन पुरा दुश्चरितेन च ।
मयैतत् प्राप्यते सर्वं स्वकृतं ह्युपभुज्यते ।।
प्राप्तव्यं तु दशायोगान्मयैतदिति निश्चितम् ।
दासीनां रावणस्याहं मर्षयामीह दुर्बला ।।

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आज्ञप्ता रावणेनैता राक्षस्यो मामतर्जयन् ।
हते तस्मिन्न कुर्युर्हि तर्जनं वानरोत्तम ॥
अयं व्याघ्रसमीपे तु पुराणो धर्मसंहितः ।
ऋक्षेण गीतः श्लोको मे तन्निबोध प्लवङ्गम ॥
न परः पापमादत्ते परेषां पापकर्मणाम् ।
समयो रक्षितव्यस्तु सन्तश्चारित्रभूषणाः ॥
पापानां वा शुभानां वा वधार्हाणां प्लवङ्गम ।
कार्यं करुणमार्येण न कश्चिन्नापराध्यति ॥
लोकहिंसाविहाराणां रक्षसां कामरूपिणाम् ।
कुर्वतामपि पापानि नैव कार्यमशोभनम् ॥
एवमुक्तं तु हनुमान् सीताया वाक्यकोविदः ।
प्रत्युवाच ततः सीतां रामपत्नीं यशस्विनीम् ॥
युक्ता रामस्य भवती धर्मपत्नी यशस्विनी ।

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 116, 37-47

It is not only an indication of what Sītā herself personally is, but also because of the *dharma* that she had seen Rāma act and also learnt from him. She explicitly says on one occasion that she had learnt these eithical principles pertaining to *dharma* only from him. This is a message she sends to Rāma through Hanumān, and accuses Rāma, without realising that he was not indifferent to her, but only did not know where she was and who had carried her away, so that he could strike the culprit and do her justice. There was no wanton cruelty on the part of Rāma in the form of any indifference towards her suffering. It is fortunate that Hanumān hastens to correct her. This is the text of Sītā's message to Rāma, 'It is from you that I have learnt that aversion to cruelty is the greatest *dharma*. I know you to be immensely potent, exceedingly powerful, abundant in enthusiasm to act righteously, knowing no end to your endeavour, unruffled, deep and noble like the ocean itself. You must therefore be compassionate towards me; and wholeheartedly come to my succour as possessing a protector like you, I should not appear helpless':

स कुरुष्व महोत्साहः कृपां मयि नरर्षभ ।
त्वया नाथवती नाथ ह्यनाथा इव दृश्यते ॥
आनृशंस्यं परो धर्मस्त्वत्त एवं मया श्रुतः ।
जानामि त्वां महावीर्यं महोत्साहं महाबलम् ॥
अपारपारमक्षोभ्यं गांभीर्यात्सागरोपमम् ।
भर्तारं ससमुद्राया धरण्या वासवोपमम् ॥

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एवमस्त्रविदां श्रेष्ठः सत्यवान् बलवानपि ।
किमर्थमस्त्रं रक्षःसु न योजयति राघवः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 5, 38, 40-45

Hanumān's reply is very effective. I declare this on an oath. Rāma is quite against the slightest grief you may experience. When Rāma grieves Lakshmaṇa follows suit. Somehow I have now found where you are, and it is no time to grieve. This very minute you would see the end of all your sorrows; and the two princes, the compeers of tigers in their might, with abundant enthusiasm to see you again, would reduce Laṅkā to ashes:

त्वच्छोकविमुखो रामो देवि सत्येन मे शपे ।
रामे दुःखाभिपन्ने च लक्ष्मणः परितप्यते ॥
कथंचिद्भवती दृष्टा न कालः परिशोचितुम् ।
इमं मुहूर्तं दुःखानां द्रक्ष्यस्यन्तमनिन्दिते ॥
तावुभौ पुरुषव्याघ्रौ राजपुत्रौ महाबलौ ।
त्वद्दर्शनकृतोत्साहौ लङ्कां भस्मीकरिष्यतः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 5, 38, 50-52

Even when her nose was cut (Fig. 16), Śūrpaṇakhā, when describing Rāma, first to Khara and Dūshaṇa in Daṇḍaka itself (Fig. 17), and later, to Rāvaṇa himself in Laṅkā (Fig. 18), cannot but portray him as nothing less than a saintly sage and as not only knowledgeable in *dharma* but also practising it. The two brothers, as she put it, subsisting on such simple fare as roots and fruits, are the very embodiment of peace and penance, practising all the time the most virtuous life:

फलमूलाशिनौ दान्तौ तापसौ धर्मचारिणौ ।

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 19, 15

Śūrpaṇakhā's description of Rāma to Rāvaṇa is again equally interesting. Fourteen thousand gigantic, terrific *rākshasas*, exclaims Śūrpaṇakhā, all powerful and terror-striking in appearance, fully panoplied and fighting from chariots, were entirely annihilated by an unprecedented shower of sharp arrows by Rāma, fighting them alone and singly on foot, in an hour and a half, and among the killed are their leaders, Khara and Dūshaṇa. Thus Rāma gave

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protection to all the sages of the forest and made Daṇḍakā a paradisial haven to live in. I am the only one let off alive though maimed, as Rāma, who knows *dharma* so well, would not even apprehend not to talk of allow the taking away the life of a woman:

रक्षसां भीमरुपाणां सहस्राणि चतुर्दश ।
निहतानि शरैस्तीक्ष्णैस्तेनैकेन पदातिना ।
अर्धाधिकमुहुर्तेन खरश्च सहदूषणः ।
ऋषीणामभयं दत्तं कृतक्षेमश्च दण्डकाः ।।
एका कथं चिन्मुक्ताहं परिभूय महात्मना ।
स्त्रीवधं शङ्कमानेन रामेण विदितात्मना ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 34, 9-12

Earlier even before the arrival of Śūrpaṇakhā the *rākshasa* Akaṁpana runs to him post haste and describes the glory of Rāma and his bestowal of powerful protection to *dharma* represented by the sages in the Daṇḍakā forest. Akaṁpana, the unshaken, was indeed so shaken by the dazzle of Rāma's victory in the cause of *dharma* for protecting the sages, on the accomplishment of which, he was welcomed by Sītā, her face wreathed in smiles:

तं दृष्ट्वा शत्रुहन्तारं महर्षीणां सुखावहम् ।
वभूव हृष्टा वैदेही भर्तारं परिषस्वजे ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 31, 39-40

that only on an assurance of protection by Rāvaṇa, with his quivering slightly assuaged, he could describe Rāma's enthusiasm for protecting the sages of Daṇḍakā, and through them *dharma.* He could, Akaṁpana felt, roll up the sky itself with all its luminous stars and planets. He could raise up the earth even if it were sinking in the waters of the deluge, or he could even shatter the shores of the ocean to drown the earth enveloping it in a flood of waters of the deluge as it were. With his arrows he could stop the fury of the ocean or even the movement of the wind. It is impossible for you to overcome Rāma as it is like the sinners trying to win heaven. This is not only an appraisal of Rāma's almost supernatural powers that even when witnessesed by his own eyes, it was yet difficult for him to belive his own personal experience of it. The last line in his statement is indeed significant as he was

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convinced beyond doubt that it was as impossible for evil-doers to overcome Rāma, the very personification of righteousness, as heaven is impossible for sinners to win:

सताराग्रहनक्षत्रं नभश्चाप्यवसादयेत् ।
असौ रामस्तु मज्जन्तीं श्रीमानभ्युद्धरेन्महीम् ॥
भित्वा वेलां समुद्रस्य लोकानाप्लावयेद्विभुः ।
वेगं वापि समुद्रस्य वायुं वा विधमेच्छरैः ॥
संहृत्य वा पुनर्लोकान् विक्रमेण महायशाः ।
शक्तः स पुरुषव्याघ्रः स्रष्टुं पुनरपि प्रजाः ॥
न हि रामो दशग्रीव शक्यो जेतुं त्वया युधि ।
रक्षसां वापि लोकेन स्वर्ग : पापजनैरिव ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 31, 24-27

But it is Mārīcha's appraisal of Rāma that reveals the truth of Garuḍa's statement that Rāma is the beloved one to even his worst enemies:

सखे राघव धर्मज्ञ रिपूणामपि वत्सल ।

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 50, 56

Mārīcha really tries his best to convince Rāvaṇa that it is as difficult to overcome this great personification of righteousness and valour as for the opulent to enter heaven, impossible like the camel the eye of the needle, as uttered by Jesus in Biblical context. In his mental distraction at the disfigurement of Śūrpaṇakhā, Rāvaṇa really raves as he tells Mārīcha, whose help he seeks against Rāma, when he describes him as the one who had killed his entire army of *rākshasas*, reason enough for abusing him as a curse of dark spot on the Kshatriyas, devoid of character, cruel, foolish, greedy and consequently void of self control, transgressor of *dharma*, and the very embodiment of unrighteousness, going contrary to the good of all beings, using his extraordinary power only to kill unprovoked in the forest:

स हन्ता तस्य सैन्यस्य रामः क्षत्रियपांसनः ।
दुःशीलः कर्कशस्तीक्ष्णो मूर्खो लुब्धोऽजितेन्द्रियः ॥
त्यक्तधर्मो ह्यधर्मात्मा भूतानामहिते रतः ।
येन वैरं विनारण्ये सत्त्वमाश्रित्य केवलम् ॥

Rāmāyāṇa 3, 36, 11-12

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Mārīcha, though terribly hurt by and mortally afraid of Rāma, and would fain gladly see his end, still for the very good of Rāvaṇa disabuses his mind of wrong notions of Rāma, by narrating just the bare truth about him and requests him to desist from encountering such a deadly foe, that only forebode ominously disaster for him. He emphatically denies that Rāma was abandoned by his father. Rāma never and in no manner transgresses any rules of *dharma.* He is neither selfseeking nor wild in character and is certainly not a blot on the Kshatriya race. He is not devoid of the essential virtues of *dharma.* By his very adherence to *dharma* he enhances the joy of his mother Kausalyā. Rāma is not cruel nor does he act contrary to the good and welfare of beings. Finding that his father had been ensnared by Kaikeyī on a point of adherence to truth, being so steadfast in *dharma*, he undertook to save the word of his father and reluctantly only was allowed to leave for the forest to satisfy Kaikeyī and maintain the honour of his father, giving up not only the kingdom but all the pleasures therefrom to enter the Daṇḍakā forest. Let it be emphatically repeated again that Rāma is not wantonly cruel. He is anything but unlettered, being exceedingly wise. He is just the opposite of one given to abandon, possessed of such great self control. Hence you should not, just on a wrong hearsay utter what is indeed falsehood. Let me correct you and tell you that Rāma is the very embodiment of *dharma*, most saintly and of unfailing valour, assuring victory as always his righteousness prevails. He is the emperor of all the world like Indra over the entire domain of the celestials:

न च पित्रा परित्यक्तो नामर्यादः कथं च न ।
न लुब्धो न च दुःशीलो न च क्षत्रियपांसनः ।।
न च धर्मगुणैर्हीनः कौसल्यानन्दवर्धनः ।
न तीक्ष्णो न च भूतानां सर्वेषामहिते रतः ।।
वञ्चितं पितरं दृष्ट्वा कैकेय्या सत्यवादिनम् ।
करिष्यामीति धर्मात्मा तात प्रव्रजितो वनम् ।।
कैकेय्याः प्रियकामार्थं पितुर्दशरथस्य च ।
हित्वा राज्यं च भोगं च प्रविष्टो दण्डकावनम् ।।
न रामः कर्कशस्तात नाविद्वान्नाजितेन्द्रियः ।
अनृतं दुःश्रुतं चैव नैव त्वं वक्तुमर्हसि ।।

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रामो विग्रहवान् धर्मः साधुः सत्यपराक्रमः ।
राजा सर्वस्य लोकस्य देवानां मघवा इव ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 37, 8-13

In Mārīcha's discussion with Rāvaṇa to dissuade him from fighting Rāma, Bhaṭṭi lays stress, no doubt on the valour of Rāma, but valour used for the protection of sages and their activities in the path of *dharma*. It is only Khara and Dūshaṇa who had fought with him that know Rāma's valour (Fig. 19). The sages who could successfully accomplish the completion of their sacrifices by the protection afforded them by Rāma, know equally well his valour:

संवित्तः सहयुध्वानौ तच्छक्तिं खरदूषणौ ।
यज्वनश्च ससुत्वानो यानगोपीन्मखेषु सः ॥

Bhaṭṭikāvya 5, 37

Bhaṭṭi again repeats Rāma's unstinted enthusiasm in protecting the interest of *dharma* represented by the sages. Śūrpaṇakhā learns from Lakshmaṇa about Rāma as the protector of the sacrifices of sages. He is the destroyer in battle of the desecrators of sactifices and the promoter of the growth of *dharma* by assuring protection to the sages, their wives who join them in the sacrificial rites and their cattle that contribute the sacrificial offerings:

जेता यज्ञद्रुहां संख्ये धर्मसन्तानसूर्वने ।
प्राप्य दारगवानां यं मुनीनामभयं सदा ॥

Bhaṭṭikāvya 4, 27

Kshemendra even goes to the extent of making Mārīcha hesitate to attack so righteous a person as Rāma and on that score also dissuade Rāvaṇa. Rāma appears almost endeared and most lovable to Mārīcha by his extraordinary qualities including his inclination to *dharma*. Rāma is of lovable character, is the end of the prosperity of wicked foes, is the abode of all great qualities; how can we harm him? This he addresses to Rāvaṇa:

रामोऽभिरामचरितो विरामः शत्रुसंपदाम् ।
गुणारामः कथं नाम चरामस्तस्य विप्रियम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 3, 7, 16

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Even at the last moment when Śuka is sent as a spy by Rāvaṇa, he returns and advises him not to fight Rāma because he is convinced that he does not swerve the least from *dharma* and *dharma* is so steady in him that it is entirely unshaken. His words are exactly this. He excels in valour, but more than all this is his steadfastness to *dharma*:

इक्ष्वाकूणामतिरथो लोके विख्यातपौरुषः ।
यस्मिन्न चलते धर्मो यो धर्मान्नातिवर्तते ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 28, 19

At the last minute even in despair the maternal grandfather of Rāvaṇa himself tries to plead with his grandson to desist from fighting Rāma a *dharmātmā* for whose victory even the *devaṛishis* celestial sages and the celestials also pray. Please give up fight with him and try to make peace:

यस्य देवर्षयः सर्वे गन्धर्वाश्च जयैषिणः ।
विरोधं मा गमस्तेन सन्धिस्ते तेन रोचताम् ॥

Rāmāyāṇa 6, 35, 11

He points out that as Rāma has completely devoted himself to *dharma*, Rāvaṇa and all the hosts of *rākshasas* are equally wedded to *adharma*. It is surprising that Mālyavān, himself a *rākshasa*, is so objective. *Dharma*, he says, is the one chosen by the gods and *adharma* by the *asuras*. *Dharma* always finally envelops and destroys *adharma*. When *dharma* overcomes *adharma*, the aeon itself is *kṛita*. When *adharma* overcomes *dharma*, then the evil aeon Kali starts. You have roamed all over the different worlds, destroying *dharma* and have embraced *adharma*. That is why our foes are strengthened, and so your *adharma* that is on the increase is now slowly swallowing you up like a monstrous python:

धर्मो हि श्रूयते पक्षो ह्यमराणां महात्मनाम् ।
अधर्मो रक्षसां पक्षोह्यसुराणां च रावण ॥
धर्मो वै ग्रसतेऽधर्मं ततः कृतमभूद्युगम् ।
अधर्मो ग्रसते धर्मं ततस्तिष्यः प्रवर्तते ॥
तत्त्वया चरता लोकान् धर्मो विनिहतो महान् ।

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अधर्मः प्रगृहीतश्च तेनास्मद्बलिनः परं
स प्रमादाद्विवृद्धस्ते ऽधर्मोऽहिर्ग्रसते हि नः ।

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 35, 13-16

Kshemendra puts this very pithily. *Dharma* is the abode of victory and sinful immoral action is the path to destruction. The celestials are ever on the side of *dharma* and naturally their desire is always victory for Rāma who is a *dharmātmā*:

जयस्यायतनं धर्मः पापं वर्त्म क्षयस्य च ।
धर्मपक्षे स्थिता देवा रामस्य विजयैषिणः ।।

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 6, 371

Rāvaṇa himself has a taste of Rāma's *dharma* which itself not only puts him to shame but almost makes him hate himself for having been placed in a position to be treated so magnanimously by Rāma. Rāma is fully conscious that Rāvaṇa was unjustified in fighting him, a foot soldier, from his chariot and in full panoply. Still finding Rāvaṇa in no state to fight, so tired and reeling even as he fought, advises him to go back, rest, refresh himself and continue the fight from his chariot the next day:

गच्छानुजानामि रणार्दितस्त्वम् प्रविश्य रात्रिंचरराज लङ्काम् ।
आश्वास्य निर्याहि रथी च धन्वी तदा बलं द्रक्ष्यसि मे रथस्थः ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 59, 143

It is the extraordinary vigilance of Rāma in the cause of *dharma* and steadfastness to it in spite of its apparent impotence to save its adherent, while *dharma* looked almost like carrying to the top of the pinnacle of glory the very transgressor of *dharma* and the upholder of *adharma*, that at a stage, Lakshmaṇa's faith in *dharma* is almost shaken, when he finds that Rāma, so adhering to *dharma*, suffers all the while and Rāvaṇa, so completely flouting *dharma* and guilty of the highest *adharma*, is exceedingly happy. He exclaims to Rāma upbraiding *dharma* for not protecting Rāma. This *dharma* is indeed fruitless, incapable as it is of protecting you who have always trod the path of virtue with absolute control of all your senses. We cannot experience *dharma* as we see before us beings both mobile and immobile. If it were as these,

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you would really not be in distress. If *adharma* were really as real, Rāvaṇa would have gone to hell, and you, wedded to *dharma*, would never have experienced sorrow. But really Rāvaṇa has no sorrows and you have all of them. *Dharma* and *adharma* are opposites of each other. I feel that *dharma* is best understood by *dharma* and *adharma* by *adharma*. If the wicked acting wickedly reap the fruit of wickedness and not of goodness (*dharma*) and the good enjoy the fruit of *dharma* that would really stand to reason by the nature of the fruit obtained. But as I find that fortune favours those who are firmly established in *adharma* and those ever wedded to *dharma* suffer the most, I feel that both *dharma* and *adharma* are really quite empty and meaningless:

शुभे वर्त्मनि तिष्ठन्तं त्वामार्य विजितेन्द्रियम् ।
अनर्थेभ्यो न शक्नोति त्रातुं धर्मो निरर्थकः ॥
भूतानां स्थावराणां च जंगमानां च दर्शनम् ।
यथास्ति न तथा धर्मस्तेन नास्तीति मे मतिः ॥
यथैव स्थावरं व्यक्तं जंगमं च तथाविधम् ।
नायमर्थस्तथा युक्तस्त्वद्विधो न विपद्यते ॥
यद्यधर्मो भवेद्भूतो रावणो नरकं व्रजेत् ।
भवांश्च धर्मयुक्तो वै नैवं व्यसनमाप्नुयात् ॥
तस्य च व्यसनाभावाव्द्यसनं च गते त्वयि ।
धर्मो भवत्यधर्मश्च परस्परविरोधिनौ ॥
धर्मेणोपलभेद्धर्ममधर्मं चाप्यधर्मतः ।
यद्यधर्मेण युज्येयुर्येष्वधर्मः प्रतिष्ठितः ॥
यदि धर्मेण युज्येरन्नाधर्मरुचयो जनाः ।
धर्मेण चरतां धर्मस्तया चैषां फलं भवेत् ॥
यस्मादर्था विवर्धन्ते येष्वधर्मः प्रतिष्ठितः ।
क्लिश्यन्ते धर्मशीलाश्च तस्मादेतौ निरर्थकौ ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 83, 14-21

The same elaborate analysis of *dharma* and *adharma* by Lakshmaṇa as given by Vālmīki is beautifully given also by Kshemendra with appropriate similies to enliven his narration. It is in the context as in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, where Rāma, as if his earlier suffering was not enough, has a dreadful apparition of Sītā being killed, in reality, only an illusion of Sītā created purely by the magical power of Indrajit. When Rāma faints on hearing of the death of Sītā as Hanumān and others had witnessed, and feels

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overwhelmed with grief, Lakshmaṇa laments: Alas, there is so much of adherence in this world to immaculate life and character, but it all appears to be in vain. It is as devoid of fruit as an impotent one longing for a son. Fie on *dharma*! as it is apparent that the most righteous persons, in no way deserving sorrow, are ever tormented by it. Salutation to sin, those indulging in which are always rewarded with prosperity. My revered brother has so meticulously guarded *dharma* which is not only a fraud but a promoter or misery. Of what use is it when it does not protect one of noble equanimity even in the worst of misfortunes? On the dictate of *dharma*, my revered brother gave up an empire just on the word of his father, and by thus renouncing he lost his wealth and prosperity, posession of which alone could put down every misfortune. For the lofty minded one of noble birth, suddenly deprived of wealth and prosperity, all troubles multiply to shrivel him up, like one whose appetite is killed by digestive disorders. Again as every action depends on wealth available for it, like a courtesan to be gained only by pelf, every desirable act becomes impossible for one penniless, while it is increasingly facilitated in the case of those who could afford it by their opulence:

अहो वन सदाचारे लोको मिथ्यैव सादरः ।
षण्डस्येन सुतो यस्य कश्चिन्नास्ति फलोदयः ॥
धिक् धर्मं यद्दुःखार्हा धर्मिष्ठा दुःखभागिनः ।
नमः पापाय संसक्तो यस्मिन्साभ्युदयो जनः ॥
आर्येण धर्मो मिथ्यैव क्लेशाय परिरक्षितः ।
किं तेन कृच्छ्रकालेषु यो न रक्षति धीरताम् ॥
धर्मानुरोधादार्येण त्यक्तं राज्यं पितुर्गिरा ।
विनष्टो यत्परित्यागादर्थोऽनर्थनिबर्हण : ॥
विपन्नार्थस्य सहसा कुलीनस्यार्यचेतसः ।
मन्दाग्नेरिव वर्धन्ते दोषाः शोषाय केवलम् ॥
निवर्तन्ते दरिद्राणां प्रवर्तन्ते ससम्पदाम् ।
धनाधीनाः क्रियाः सर्वा वेश्या इव शरीरिणाम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇamāñjarī 6, 10, 79-84

In the text of Vālmīki, Sumantra in great grief, though in a wording milder than of Lakshmaṇa, expresses his profound agitation and almost a shake in his faith of *dharma* in seeing Rāma's great suffering in spite of all his goodness. Sumantra feels and expresses

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to Rāma that all the rigour of celibacy practised by Rāma, his great study of all the best to be learnt, his unbounded compassion and righteous and straight conduct indeed had borne no fruit, when he experienced such distress:

न मन्ये ब्रह्मचर्येऽस्ति स्वधीतं वा फलोदयः ।
मार्दवार्जवयोर्वापि त्वां चेद्व्यसनमागतम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 52, 19

But it is only a momentary feeling of despair. Very soon when he aims his arrows at the most formidable foe, Indrajit, who had captured and humiliated Indra himself, the lord of the celestials, Lakshmaṇa is so convinced of Rāma's adherence to *dharma* and *dharma's* potency that he pronounces the oath that if Rāma were really the embodiment of *dharma* and wedded to truth, as the son of the great and veracious Daśaratha himself and in valour without a peer, O! arrow, kill this offspring of Rāvaṇa:

धर्मात्मा सत्यसंधश्च रामो दाशरथिर्यदि ।
पौरुषे चाप्रतिद्वन्द्वः शरैनं जहि रावणिम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 91, 73

And the arrow does it.

It is not without reason that Daśaratha evaluates Rāma so highly. As Vālmīki gives it, though Daśaratha was proud of all his sons that were like four arms emanating from him, all the four being of exceptional merit and most beloved (Fig. 20), yet Rāma, among them the most lustrous and surpassing the best in noble qualities, excited most the affection of his father, like the Almighty the love of all beings on earth (Fig. 21):

सर्वे एव तु तस्येष्टाश्चत्वारः पुरुषर्षभाः ।
स्वशरीराद्विनिर्वृत्ताश्चत्वार इव बाहवः ॥
तेषामपि महातेजा रामो रतिकरः पितुः ।
स्वयम्भूरिव भूतानां बभूव गुणवत्तरः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 1, 5-6

Daśaratha cannot help expressing himself with pride has admi-

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ration for Rāma. You are born to me, O Rāma! as my most beloved offspring, without a peer on earth:

जातमिष्टमपत्यं मे त्वमद्यानुपमं भुवि ।

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 4, 13

How could it be any different when the Lord who could hold the entire universe in His womb decided (Fig. 22) to dwell in a chosen human womb to alleviate the distress of the celestials famous by the appellation of Rāma to humiliate the lord of the foes of the gods by severing all his heads with a single arrow (Fig. 23):

अपि कुक्षिस्थनिःशेषलोकत्रयभरोद्वहः ।
शोकक्षयाय मर्त्यस्त्रीकुक्षिवासं विधाय वः ॥
कुर्यां राम इति ख्यातो भूत्वा भर्तुः सुरद्विषाम् ।
एकबाणकृताशेषशिरच्छेदपराभवम् ॥

Jānakīharaṇa 2, 75-76.

Even when advising Rāma how he could conduct himself as a crown prince, Daśaratha cannot help saying like Śukanāsa admonishing Chandrāpīḍa in the line.

विदितवेदितव्यस्याधीतसर्वशास्त्रस्य नाल्पमप्युपदेष्टव्यमस्ति ।

Kādambarī

Though you are by nature very noble and disciplined, possessed of extraordinary good qualities, still because of my affection for you, I am offering you words of advice, though to you with such excellent qualities this is quite redundant. It is only my anxiety born of affection that makes me say so:

कामतस्त्वं प्रकृत्यैव विनीतो गुणवानसि ।
गुणवत्यपि तु स्नेहात्पुत्र वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 3, 42

Kumāradāsa expresses the same idea in an equally charming manner. What is a counsel to you who are by nature so charming in conduct! Yet for my own mental satisfaction, excessive attachment foreboding meaningless fear, I offer you advice,

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अनुशिष्टिः प्रकृत्यैव भद्रं भवति कीदृशी ।
प्रीतये मनसः स्नेहकातरस्य निगद्यते ॥

Jānakīharaṇa 10, 21

But Daśaratha's advice is the quintessence of wisdom. People well protected shower treasures and elevate the king that is a hero, a judge of the best in men, competent in statecraft and free from attachment:

शूरं पुरुषसारज्ञं नीतौ पटुमलम्पटम् ।
वर्धयन्ति नृपं कोशैः संयक्संरक्षिताः प्रजाः ॥

Jānakīharaṇa 10, 34

Kshemendra makes Daśaratha proudly announce even to Janaka how happy he is to think of Rāma as a bridegroom answering all the four requisites. Just as gold has to be tested in four ways by rubbing on the touchstone, by breaking, by heating and by beating, the excellence of a person is tested by four factors, his family, character, qualities and actions:

यथा चतुर्भिः कनकं परीक्ष्यते निघर्षणच्छेदनतापताडनैः ।
तथा चतुर्भिः पुरुषः परीक्ष्यते कुलेन शीलेन गुणेन कर्मणा ॥

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī, 1, 5, 27

A commentary on this is almost given by Bhavabhūti. Enlightened by Viśvāmitra about the two princes in his company, Kuśadhvaja remarks that assuredly the birth of those two boys could not be in any family other than of the Raghus. Where else except from the milky ocean could the moon and Kaustubha gem be born:

नान्यत्र राघवाद्वंशात्प्रसूतिर्वत्सयोः क्षमा ।
दुग्धार्णवादृते जन्म चन्द्रकौस्तुभयोः कुतः ॥

Mahāvīracharita 1, 23

Viśvāmitra appreciates and commends him for his description of the family of the Raghus. You are the right person to extol the great family of the Raghus, that are never tired of performing righteous deeds, whose fame is pure and unsullied, and who have their goodness rewarded with the highest of prosperity:

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अश्रान्तपुण्यकर्माणः पावनप्रथितश्रियः ।
महाभाग्यविदस्तेषां यूयमेव स्तवक्षमाः ।।

Mahāvīracharita 1, 26

Though Paraśurāma comes terribly enraged on learning Śiva's bow broken by Rāma (Fig. 24), the moment he sights him there is an intense feeling of love and admiration for the little boy, outshining all in every way, and he actually exclaims but within himself, O Rāma! Rāma! you soothe the eyes and equally please the heart, and you are so pleasant by your good qualities beyond comprehension. Really you steal our heart. By a look at you who are a wondrous hero excelling all, my body is horripilated and my chest scathed by the tusk of Gaṇeśa on one side and marked by the thrust of the arrows of Skanda on the other truly craves for a close embrace of you;

राम राम नयनाभिरामतामाशयस्य सदृशीं समुद्वहन् ।
अप्रतर्क्यगुणरामणीयकः सर्वथैव हृदयंगमोऽसि मे ।।
हेरम्बदन्तमुसलोल्लिखितैकभित्ति वक्षो विशाखविशिखव्रणलांछितं मे ।
रोमांचकंचुकितमद्भुतवीरलाभात् सत्यं ब्रवीमि परिरब्धुमिवेच्छति त्वाम् ।।

Mahāvīracharita 2, 37-38

The form of this heroic boy difficult to assess in its magnitude of magnificance with its wondrous accomplishment of actions of no mean order, draw me so close to him and why do I still fret. O! indeed it is wonderful! The form of this boy is as it were a treasure of the merit arising out of the offering of the highest protection to the entire world that is so dear to him, and shining in it are the charm of prosperity, a lustre born of the highest ethical qualities and righteousness itself, a nobility, victory and triumphant valour. He looks as if he is the very science of archery personified to protect the worlds, or like *dharma* in physical form to protect the penance of the Brāhmaṇas, or the accumulation of success in its entirety, the come together of all great qualities in one form, a great heap of the collective merit of the entire universe in tangible shape:

अप्राकृतस्य चरितातिशयस्य भावैरत्यद्भुतैर्मम हृतस्य तथाप्यनास्था ।
कोऽप्येष वीरशिशुकाकृतिरप्रमेयमाहात्म्यसारसमुदायमयः पदार्थः ।।

Mahāvīracharita 2, 39

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आश्चर्यं । संभाव्यमिष्टभुवनाभयदानपुण्यसंभारमस्य वपुरत्र हि विस्फुरन्ती ।
लक्ष्मीश्च सात्विकगुणज्वलितं च तेजो धर्मश्च मानविजयौ च पराक्रमश्च ।।

Mahāvīracharita 2, 40

अयं हि । त्रातुं लोकानिव परिणतः कायवानस्त्रवेदः क्षात्रो धर्मः श्रित इव तनुं ब्रह्मकोशस्य गुप्त्यै ।
सामर्थ्यानामिव समुदयः संचयो वा गुणानामाविर्भूय स्थित इव जगत्पुण्यनिर्माणराशिः ।।

Mahāvīracharita 2, 41

Murāri while describing how touched Paraśurāma was at the look of Rāma whose very form amazed him, yet, makes him mistake the reverential attitute of Rāma for an unwillingness to fight and upbraids him. Your birth is in the family of the blazing sun. Your education in archery is from the great Kauśika. By giving up your duty as a warrior you are creating almost a permanent adamantine blot on your race. The reply of Rāma though undoubtedly heroic is still with a smile. O reverend Sir! What you say is true, I am born in the family of the lord of light, famed no less for warriorhood as for scholarship in the *Vedas*. From the reverend Viśvāmitra I obtained my knowledge of the use of arms. Whether it is felt and expressed as famous or infamous by anyone, born of this family, I cannot indeed dare use a weapon against a Brāhmaṇa. It is only of this impropriety I am afraid:

राजन्येभ्यो जन्म वैवस्वतेभ्यश्चक्रे चापाचार्यकं कौशिकश्च ।
क्षात्रीं चर्यामेवमुन्मुञ्चतस्ते गोत्रक्षेपी वज्रलेपः कलङ्कः ।।
भगवन् ! सत्यमेतत् ।
जातः सोऽहं दिनकरकुले क्षत्रियश्रोत्रियेभ्यः विश्वामित्रादपि भगवतो दृष्टदिव्यास्त्रपारः ।
अस्मिन् वंशे कथयतु जनो दुर्यशो वा यशो वा विप्रे शस्त्रग्रहणगुरुणः साहसिक्याद्बिभेमि ।।

Anargharāghava 4, 48-49

Viśvāmitra admires Rāma when he had completely overcome Paraśurāma (Fig. 25). Our child Rāmabhadra is so pleasing by the splendour of his heroism, his humility, his attitude bent in reverence to the venerable sage, his remarkable elevation through his eminent qualities, yet so abashed after having eradicated the pride of Paraśurāma, that he looks like a disciple standing in the presence of his preceptor after committing his first offence:

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वीरश्रिया च विनयेन च रोचमानो मन्ये मुनाववनतश्च गुणोत्तरश्च ।
लज्जां वहन् भृगुपतौ हृतवीर्यदर्पे शिष्ये गुराविव कृतप्रथमापचारः ॥

Mahāvīracharita 4, 20

It does bespeak volumes of Rāma's humility, when in that situation, he begs of Paraśurāma to forgive him for his lapse towards him. O! venerable one! whose feet are saluted by the highest Vedic seers, treasurehouse as it were of Vedic knowledge, penance and austerity, greatest of all ascetics! please do forgive me for transgressing my limits of humility just because of circumstances, I offer you my salutation with my hands brought together in worship:

यद्ब्रह्मवादिभिरुपासितवन्द्यपादविद्यातपोव्रतनिधौ तपतां वरिष्ठे ।
दैवात्कृतस्त्वयि मया विनयापचारस्तत्त्वं प्रसीद भगवन्नयमञ्जलिस्ते ॥

Mahāvīracharita 4, 21

But the noble Paraśurāma who is cured by Rāma of his inordinate ego and pride tells him that he had done him only good. What you have done, says Paraśurāma, is the right thing. Your taking up the bow to teach me a lesson has not been in vain. It was the right thing to do and in fact is no insult. It is very difficult for a surgeon to remove an excrescence without locating and cutting the corporeal frame of a being. Similarly a ruler with his weapons acts as a doctor:

एष एव वो न्यायः ।
असाध्यमन्यथा दोषं परिच्छिद्य शरीरिणाम् ।
यथा वैद्यस्तथा राजा शस्त्रपाणिर्भिषज्यति ॥

Mahāvīracharita 4, 23

Praśurāma commends Rāma and praises him in the presence of Daśaratha and Janaka. This is that Rāma who, though fierce in his valour, is cool and pleasant in his attitude, whose victorious order of punishment has reached its climax on the son of Jamadagni (Paraśurāma). Both the kings Daśaratha and Janaka are amazed at his magnanimity and exclaim 'How noble your affectionate utterance:'

स एष रामः सौम्यत्वादचण्डश्चण्डविक्रमः ।
यस्य प्रतिष्ठितं जैत्रं जामदग्येऽपि शासनम् ॥

Mahāvīracharita 4, 24

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अतिगम्भीरः सौजन्योद्गारः ।

Mahāvīracharita

Paraśurāma feels so penitant for his overweaning pride cured by Rāma that he requests Vaśishṭba and Viśvāmitra to suggest for him a measure of purification. O! elders! Rāma, himself of great self control, has humbled me. You should suggest for me the proper antedote by penance to overcome the great sin of insulting elders. You are the seers who have seen what is *dharma* in the earliest scriptural text of the *Veda* and with your knowledge increased a hundred fold have written *smṛitis* like *Manusmṛiti*, *Yājñavalkyasmṛiti* and so forth. Vaśishṭhá feels so happy that he assures him that he had really now come back to their own Vedic home and that he was not only freed from all guilt but in fact purified. Viśvamitra assures him that Rāmabhadra, as he learnt, had already removed his sin. As the ruler's punishment like *prāyaśchitta* is the destroyer of all sins as those learned in *dharma* know it; and what more was there beyond what was said by Vaśishṭha himself to explain his stand in royal presence:

वृद्धातिक्रमसंभृतस्य महतो निर्निक्तये पाप्मनः प्रायश्चेतनमादिशन्तु गुरवो रामेण दान्तस्य मे ।
प्राग्धर्मस्य भवन्त एव परमं द्रष्टार आसन् गुरोर्लब्ध्वा ज्ञानमनेकधा प्रवचनैर्मन्वादयः प्राणयन् ॥

Mahāvīracharita 4, 25

वशिष्ठः—अद्य नः श्रोत्रियाणां गृहे जातोऽसि ।
तत्परिपूत एवासि ।
विश्वामित्रः—अपहतं ते विद्मः पाप्मानं रामभद्रेण ।
यतः प्रायश्चित्तमिव राजदण्डमप्येनसो निष्क्रियमामनन्ति धर्माचार्याः ।
किं पुनर्यदत्रभवान् वसिष्ठः प्रजापालसन्निधौ ।

Mahāvīracharita 4

Rāma is so meticulous about *dharma* that even though he is convinced that Tāḍakā is a menace to the world, he feels very strongly that a woman should not be killed. That is why Viśvāmitra has to argue and persuade him to kill Tāḍakā though a woman. You are indeed a peerless prince, righteous in outlook, but you need not consider twice the fact that she is a woman whose killing is forbidden. For the good of the classes and masses a royal prince has to act and perform deeds irrespective of how they appear, kind

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or cruel, just because the innocent people have to be protected. That the protector of the people has to perform acts that may be holy or unholy, is the ancient rule of conduct of those upholding the burden of royalty. There is an ancient legend of how Indra destroyed Mantharā, the daughter of the demon Vairochana, who was planning to destroy the earth itself. You should therefore give up this abhorrence, and acting on my precept, you should kill her. Rāma replies suitably that as ordered by his father, and on account of his reverence for paternal precept and because this is a command from Viśvāmitra himself, he would act and without any further thought about it. But even so, on sighting her, Rāma goes back into his original frame of mind, the natural instinct of avoiding feminine slaughter. I cannot make bold. This demoness is protected by her feminity. I feel like destroying only her power and action. And again Viśvāmitra has to call his attention to overcome his compassion, reminds him that she is sinful and most wicked:

न हि ते स्त्रीवधकृते घृणा कार्या नरोत्तम ।
चातुर्वर्ण्यहितार्थाय कर्तव्यं राजसूनुना ।।
नृशंसमनृशंसं वा प्रजारक्षणकारणात् :
पावनं वा सदोषं बा कर्तव्यं रक्षता सता ।।
राज्यभारनियुक्तानामेष धर्मः सनातनः ।
अधर्म्यं जहि काकुत्स्थ धर्मो ह्यस्य न विद्यते ।।
श्रूयते हि पुरा शक्रो विरोचनसुतां नृप ।
पृथिवीं हन्तुमिच्छन्तीं मन्थरामभ्यसूदयत् ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 25, 17-20

तस्मादेनां घृणां त्यक्त्वा जहि मच्छासनान्नृप ।

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 25, 23

न ह्येनामुत्सहे हन्तुं स्त्रीस्वभावेन रक्षिताम् ।
वीर्यं चास्या गतिं चापि हनिष्यामीति मे मतिः ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 26, 12

अलं ते घृणया राम पापैषा दुष्टचारिणी ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 26, 21

In this context, Bhavabhūti, puts it laconically in two lines but effectively by bringing in as a witness of Rāma's hestitation

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to kill Tāḍakā the preceptor of Rāvaṇa, the old *rākshasa* Sarvamāya, who wonders at the hesitation of Rāma as he argues, 'but reverend sir, this is a women'; and Kuśadhvaja is stuck with wonder at this and exclaims, 'You are indeed Rāmabhadra born of the noble family of Ikshvākus.' Even the *rākshasa* cannot help saying even more than that. This is really the noble son of Daśaratha who is not only not in the least shaken by the sight of the devastating appearance of Tāḍakā that is almost like a calamitous portent, but instructed to destroy her, hesitates to attack a female. When Viśvāmitra points out that the entire assembly of sages there would be destroyed in a minute, Rāma replies 'Yes, reverend sir, you know best. As you can best examine all the blemishes in an action, your words take rank with the text of the *Veda* and when something is accepted by you as the right action, that becomes acceptable to me in the matter of merit and sin:'

रामः—भगवन् ! स्त्री खल्वियम् ।
राजाः—साधु, सत्यमैक्ष्वाको रामभद्रः ।
राक्षसः—अयं स रामो दाशरथिः य एष, उत्तालताटकोत्पातदर्शनेऽप्यप्रकम्पितः ।
नियुक्तस्तत्प्रमाथाय स्त्रैणेन विचिकित्ससे ।

Mahāvīracharita 1, 37

विश्वामित्रः—त्वर्यतां वत्सः किं न पश्यसि ब्राह्मणजनस्य संघातमृत्युमग्रतः ।
रामः—एवं भवन्तो जानन्ति । सर्वदोषानभिष्वङ्गादाम्नायसमतां गतः ।
युष्माकमभ्युपगमः प्रमाणं पुण्यपापयोः ॥

Mahāvīracharita, 1, 38

Murāri again describes this situation in a slightly elaborated way. Rāma with hesitation exclaims 'O reverend sir, do you want me to kill this woman!' Just then there is the tumultuous cry of the sages terribly frightened by Tāḍakā. It is the voice of Śunaśśepa who was almost a son to Viśvāmitra. Rāma replies requesting him to just wait a minute. 'Your command is as important to me as Viśvāmitra's. There is no need for you to appeal to him in the matter. For me, there is no difference between Madhuchchhanda the son of Viśvāmitra and yourself, his adopted son.' Viśvāmitra now reminds Rāma the calamity that is imminent; and as Lakshmaṇa ruminates in his mind as to why his elder brother is still hesitant even after the command of Viśvāmitra, when it was apparent

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that a word of the *rishis* would always follow the code of *dharma*, Rāma also simultaneously ponders within himself that by the very command of his *guru*, the sage, his action even in killing a woman would not be sinful and against *dharma*. 'This shame in killing a woman which is just momentary, being there just for a while and disappearing the very next day, is now overcome by me by closing my eyes to it. The only hesitation is when for a long while the curious people beat the drum of my shame, I feel only hesitant to think of now shamefaced would be our family preceptor Vaśishṭha who is the lustre incarnate of *dharma* and is the witness of everying in the world.' When, however, he hears just then the wild cry of the demons and the demonesses 'Stop your sacrifices! O fools! here is the sharp edge of our sword. This is the short cut for you to go to heaven,' he is enraged, holds his hands in reverence to Viśvāmitra, and says 'Born in the house of Daśaratha, and holding the bow, I only hesitated to malign the family of the blazing sun by a fresh new shoot of blot. It is only hence that my mind hesitated to kill a woman. But your word is for us the deciding factor of *dharma* to set us in action:

रामः—स्त्रियमिमाम् !
(नेपथ्ये)
अब्रह्मण्यमब्रह्मण्यम् । भोस्तात विश्वामित्र परिभूयामहे । प्रहीयतामधिज्यधन्वा दाशरथिः ।
रामः—बालर्षे शुनःशेफ ! मुहूर्तं धीरो भव ।
अलं क्लिशित्वा गुरुमल्पकोऽयं विधिस्त्वदाज्ञैव गरीयसी नः ।
न कौशिकस्य त्वयि धर्मपुत्रे पुत्रे मधुच्छन्दसि वा विशेषः ॥

Anargharāghava 2, 57

विश्वामित्रः—वत्स ! कृतमुत्तरोत्तरेण । नन्वयं नेदीयानाश्रमोपघातः ।

Anargharāghava 2, 58

लक्ष्मणः—मीमांसते किमार्योऽयं कौशिकेप्यनुशासति
वाचमेषामृषीणां हि शास्त्रमेवानुवर्तते ॥
रामः—गुर्वादेशादेव निर्णीयमाणो नाधर्माय स्त्रीवधोऽपि स्थितोऽयम् ।
अद्य स्थित्वा श्वो गमिष्यद्भिरल्पैर्लज्जास्माभिर्मीलिताक्षैर्जितैव ॥

Anargharāghava 2, 59

किं तु । दीर्घं प्रजाभिरतिकौतुकुनीभिराभिरस्मिन्नकीर्तिपटहे मम ताड्यमाने ।
ज्योतिर्मयेन वपुषा जगदन्तसाक्षी लज्जिष्यते कुलगुरुर्भगवान् वशिष्ठः ॥

Anargharāghava 2, 61

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रामः—भगवन् ! जगत्त्रयगुरो ! गाधिनन्दन ।
दशरथगृहे सम्भूतं मामवाप्य धनुर्धरम् दिनकर कुलस्कन्दी कोऽयं कलङ्कनवांकुरः।
इति न वनितामेतां हन्तुं मनो विचिकित्सते यदधिकरणं धर्मस्थीयं तवैव वचांसि नः ॥

Anargharāghava 2, 62

Rāma now acts accordingly (Fig. 26).

In innocently explaining to Rāvaṇa disguised as a hermit whom, however, she took to be an ascetic in reality, Sītā answers his question by telling him that she was the wife of Rāma, an abode of good qualities, wedded to truth and purity, heroic in appearance and always striving for the good of others, who gave up an empire just to save his father's word to Kaikeyī. Rāma would always give but never receive, would ever speak the truth and spurn falsehood. This is the noble guide-way in action for Rāma ever wedded to *dharma*:

दद्यान्न प्रतिगृह्णीयात् सत्यं ब्रूयान्न चानृतम् ।
एतद्ब्राह्मण रामस्य व्रतं धृतमनुत्तमम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 47, 17-18

That he would give and never receive is a very important statement that merits as it were a scrutiny of the deeds of Rāma to better understand his life so ennobled by his actions and appearing a commentary on it as it were. There are two important incidents that illustrate this pointedly. The first is where Guha meets Rāma. Guha is the chief of the Śabaras, the hunters, and it is on the banks of the river Gaṅgā. He feels so honoured by the presence of Rāma in his territory, approaches him with great reverence and affection, brings a variety of rich food, soft cushions and couches and fodder for the horses, and requests Rāma to accept his hospitality. After embracing Guha, enquiring of welfare in his territory and appreciating him for coming on foot as a mark of respect, Rāma politely tells him of his inability to accept anything from any, and hence his grand hospitality though offered with affection. He reminds him that he was wedded to the life of a hermit in the forest, wearing bark garment with seat of *kuśa* grass and fruits and roots as food. I shall accept your hospitality only in regard to my horses, the beloved ones of my father. When they

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are happy I am equally so. Guha immediately orders this to be done. And clad in bark garments, Rāma with his upper garment worn in *upavīta* fashion performed *sandhyā*, and after partaking of only water, brought by Lakshmaṇa himself, as fare for the night, lay and rested on the ground with Sītā, while Laksmaṇa and Guha kept watch. Rāma would not accept from a dear friend even a simple thing like food as a *pratigraha*, offering.

यदत्र भवता किंचित् प्रीत्या समुपकल्पितम् ।
सर्वं तदनुजानामि न हि वर्ते प्रतिग्रहे ॥
कुशचीराजिनधरं फलमूलाशिनं च माम् ।
विद्धि प्रणिहितं धर्मे तापसं वनगोचरम् ॥
अश्वानां खादनेनाहमर्थी नान्येन केनचित् ।
एतावतात्र भवता भविष्यामि सुपूजितः ॥
एते हि दयिता राज्ञः पितुर्दशरथस्य मे ।
एतैः सुविहितैरश्वैर्भविष्याम्यहमर्चितः ॥
अश्वानां प्रतिपानं च खादनं चैव सोऽन्वशात् ।
गुहस्तत्रैव पुरुषांस्त्वरितं दीयतामिति ॥
ततश्चीरोत्तरासङ्गः सन्ध्यामन्वास्य पश्चिमाम् ।
जलमेवाददे भोज्यं लक्ष्मणेनाहृतं स्वयम् ॥
तस्य भूमौ शयानस्य पादौ प्रक्षाल्य लक्ष्मणः ।
सभार्यस्य ततोऽभ्येत्य तस्थौ वृक्षमुपाश्रितः ॥
गुहोऽपि सहसूतेन सौमित्रिमनुभाषयन् ।

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 50, 43-50

The other instance is when Rāma visits Agastya after ending Śambūka. The sage offers him a magnificent bracelet of gold prepared by Viśvakarmā himself, fit only for Rāma, celestial in his glory. You alone are the fittest to wear it, more than even the celestials including Indra, shining like the sun in all his lustre. This should be accepted and worn by you. In reply, Rāma of the noble Ikshvāku family replies, thoughtfully considering the code of conduct of a Kshatriya, 'Receiving a thing, O venerable one', says Rama 'is not forbidden for a Brāhmaṇa, but being a Kshatriya how could I receive it and that too from a Brāhmaṇa. The sage now persuades Rāma by recalling how on earth in the dim past, when there was no king and the people wanted one for protection, begged of the supreme being to provide them with a ruler like Indra for the celestials, Brahmā ordered the Lokapālas to give a part of

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their quality to the king who was created and called Kshupa and he had the essential parts of the four Lokapālas. That is why the king rules as Indra, promotes well-being like Varuṇa, makes prosperous like Kubera and metes out justice maintaining order like Yama. Agastya now calls on Rāma to receive this of him in his capacity as Indra. Again the nobility of Rāma is such that though he understood *dharma* so well, when he finds that a great sage, who is the repository of the knowledge of *dharma*, explains to him a special point in *dharma*, he takes it as the final word, even as he took it in the case of Viśvāmitra's command to kill Tāḍakā, though a woman:

इदं चाभरणं सौम्य निर्मितं विश्वकर्मणा ।
दिव्यं दिव्येन वपुषा दीप्यमानं स्वतेजसा ॥
प्रतिगृह्णीष्व काकुत्स्थ मत्प्रियं कुरु राघव ॥...
तस्मात् प्रदास्ये विधिवत्तत्प्रतीच्छ नराधिप ।
द्रिव्यमाभरणं चित्रं प्रदीप्तमिव भास्करम् ॥
अथोवाच महात्मानमिक्ष्वाकूणां महारथः ।
रामो मतिमतां श्रेंष्ठः क्षत्रधर्ममनुस्मरन् ॥
प्रतिग्रहोऽयं भगवन् ब्राह्मणस्याविगर्हितः ।
गृह्णीयां क्षत्रियोऽहं वै कथं ब्राह्मणपुङ्गव ॥
ब्राह्मणेन विशेषेण दत्तं तद्वक्तुर्महसि ।
एवमुक्तस्तु रामेण प्रत्युवाच महान् ऋषिः......
तं ब्रह्मा लोकपालानां सहांशैः समयोजयत् ।
ततो ददौ नृपं तासां प्रजानामीश्वरं क्षुपम् ॥
तत्रैन्द्रेण च भागेन महीमाज्ञापयन्नृपः ।
वरुणेन तु भागेन वपुः पुष्यति राघव ॥
कौवेरेण तु भागेन वित्तमासां ददौ तदा ।
यस्तु याम्योऽभवद्भागस्तेन शास्ति स्म स प्रजाः ॥
तत्रैन्द्रेण नरश्रेष्ठ भागेन रघुनन्दन ।
प्रतिगृह्णीष्व भद्रं ते तारणार्थं मम प्रभो ॥
तस्य तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा ऋषेः परमधार्मिकम् ।
तद्रामः प्रतिजग्राह मुनेराभरणं वरम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 76, 30-36, 43-48

Rāma would not receive even the small bracelet offered by so great a sage as Agastya. It is this same venerable sage that is described by Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkshita as the one who drank up in one gulp the ocean, the receptacle of the lord who sleeps on it, from whose navel arose the lotus, out of which came forth the creator of the entire universe, in the context of the great sage as one of

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the hundreds of a venerable concourse of disciples of that Lord who teaches in silence under the banian tree, to whom the poet offers his salutation as the one Lord beyond whom he could think of none else:

> यः स्रष्टा जगतां यतोऽयमभवत्तद्यस्य नाभेरमूच्छेते यत्र स तच्च यश्चुलकयांचक्रे सहान्यैः क्षणात् ।
> तादृक्षाः शतशः पुराणमुनयो यच्छिष्यवर्गे स्थिताः स स्वामी मम दैवतं तदितरो नम्नापि नाम्नायते।।
>
> *Śivotkarshamañjarī* 23

It naturally indicates the highest veneration that Rāma had for him, and yet the greater veneration for the dictates of *dharma* could make him pause and hesitate, almost refuse any gift from anyone including Agastya himself. It is no wonder, therefore, that when Śarabhaṅga offers divine *lokas* for Rāma, as he, out of love for him, who was accustomed only to a life of a prince and had never experienced a hardship, felt he should not suffer nor even Sītā or the younger one Lakshmaṇa, and wishing them all joy and happiness, hoped to help them in this, by providing them to enjoy pleasures of a celestial character, so much greater than even the earthly ones, he only gets a reply from that noble prince that whatever celestial spheres were to be obtained would be won personally by himself and very respectfully refuses to accept any from others, including even those like the great *ṛishis* whom he venerated so much. Śarabhaṅga tells him that he had just been requested by Indra to grace heaven by his presence, but knowing that Rāma was close by and approaching him, he would not go to the world of even Brahmā or any other without seeing Rāma and welcoming him as his beloved guest, a tiger among heroes, completely wedded to *dharma* and most saintly in character. 'I have won. O Rāma, eternal dwelling in auspicious celestial worlds like that of Brahmā or Indra. All these which are mine, I am giving you, please have them.' But Rāma, learned in all the *dharmaśāstras*, replies most respectfully, 'O venerable sage, I shall myself win all those celestial worlds by my own effort. I only request you to kindly suggest to me where I can dwell here in the forest:

> ममैष वरदो राम ब्रह्मलोकं निनीषति ।
> जितमुग्रेण तपसा दुष्प्रापमकृतात्मभिः ।।
> अहं ज्ञात्वा नरव्याघ्र वर्तमानमदूरतः ।
> ब्रह्मलोकं न गच्छामि त्वामदृष्ट्वा प्रियातिथिम् ।।

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त्वयाहं पुरुषव्याघ्र धार्मिकेण महात्मना ।
समागम्य गमिष्यामि त्रिदिवं देवसेवितम् ।।
अक्षया नरशार्दूल मया लोका जिताः शुभाः ।
ब्राह्म्याश्च नाकपृष्ठाश्च प्रतिगृह्णीष्व मामकान् ।।
एवमुक्तो नरव्याघ्रः सर्वशास्त्रविशारदः ।
ऋषिणा शरभङ्गेन राघवो वाक्यमब्रवीत् ।।
अहमेवाहरिष्यामि सर्वलोकान् महामुने ।
आवासं त्वहमिच्छामि प्रदिष्टमिह कानने ।।

Rāmāyana 3, 5, 28-34

And with wonder Rāma sees the great sage enter the fire to shuffle the mortal coil and ascend heaven, having finished his purpose of seing and welcoming Rāma (Fig. 27).

Another instance is Sutīkshṇa, who similarly offers him *lokas*. As Rāma approaches the hermitage of Sutīkshṇa and bows to him, he welcomes him as a great hero and as the foremost upholding *dharma* (Fig. 28). 'By your presence in this hermitage, it is now really occupied in the true sense. Even though invited by Indra, the great lord of the celestials, I have refrained from ascending heaven as I have been awaiting you. Indra, who had come to me, informs me that by my deeds of merit I have won all the celestial worlds. It is my desire that all these celestial spheres where the celestial sages dwell, should be given to you by me so that you could be happy there with your wife and brother. Rāma, with great veneration and respect speaks to this sage of truthful utterance even as Indra addressing Brahmā himself. Again here he politely refuses the offer and tells him that he would win these worlds by his own effort, and that he just wanted only his guidance regarding a place to dwell in the forest. I know you to be kind to all beings ever wishing for their welfare as I have been informed by Śarabhaṅga:

स्वागतं खलु ते वीर राम धर्मभृतां वर ।
आश्रमोऽयं त्वया प्राप्तः सनाथ इव सांप्रतम् ।।
प्रतीक्षमाणस्त्वामेव नारोहेऽहं महायशः ।
देवलोकमितो वीर देहं त्यक्त्वा महीतले......
उपगम्य च मां देवो महादेवः सुरेश्वरः ।
सर्वांल्लोकान् जितानाह मम पुण्येन कर्मणा ।।
तेषु देवर्षिजुष्टेषु जितेषु तपसा मया ।
मत्प्रसादात् सभार्यस्त्वं विहरस्व सलक्ष्मणः ।।

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तमुग्रतपसा युक्तं महर्षिं सत्यवादिनम् ।
प्रत्युवाचात्मवान् रामो ब्रह्माणमिव वासवः ॥
अहमेवाहरिष्यामि स्वयं लोकान् महामुने ।
आवासं त्वहमिच्छामि प्रदिष्टमिह कानने ॥
भवान् सर्वत्र कुशलः सर्वभूतहिते रतः ।
आख्यातः शरभंगेन गौतमेन महात्मना ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 7, 11-15

Normally in life, wherever there is extraordinary beauty, there is immediately a reaction towards it. Dushyanta, for example, amazed at the charm of Śakuntalā falls in love with her on the spot, but being a *dhārmika* king, he wonders whether he was justified in thinking of her as a possible bride, and finally consoles himself by the fact that having always been righteous, his mind, attuned to *dharma*, could not yearn for an impossible match going against *dharma* and his doubt is assuaged by the certain hope that Śakuntalā should be of a parentage possible to be wedded by a Kshatriya like him:

असंशयं क्षत्रपरिग्रहक्षमा यथार्यमस्यामभिलाषि मे मनः ।
सतां हि सन्देहपदेषु वस्तुषु प्रमाणमन्तःकरणप्रवृत्तयः ॥

Abhijñānaśākuntalam 1, 19

In the case of Rāma, his spirit of *dharma* is so high at the zenith that, having not only strung the bow but even broken it and having won Sītā, a paragon of beauty, to win whom was a dream with all the princes on earth, some of whom had even attacked Janaka for imposing such an impossible condition for Sītā as the prize, that Sītā herself wonders but still appreciates Rāma's attitude as he was in no hurry to aecept her unless she was chosen as his bride by his father. That is why, towards the end of the *Bālakāṇḍa*, there is a significant verse, which explains that Sītā was the dearly beloved wife of Rāma, as she was his spouse secured for him by his father himself:

प्रिया तु सीता रामस्य दाराः पितृकृता इति ।

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 77, 27

It is significant that Rāma as a *dharmātmā* has a charm not only for beauty but also a greater charm for good qualities composing

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character; and the line that follows explains this, that both by the extraordinary quality of Sītā's beauty and her personal qualities, Rāma's love for her multiplied ever so more (Fig. 29), that made him later run after the golden deer, she loved so much to have (Fig. 30):

गुणाद्रूपगुणाच्चापि प्रीतिर्भूयोऽभ्यवर्धत ।

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 77, 28

It is no wonder that Sītā makes a special note of this and when talking to the great *sādhvī* Anasūyā (Fig. 31) specially expresses her wonder that though Rāma had won her by stringing the bow, he would not still accept her till there was Daśaratha's approval.

Anasūyā who had heard of the impossible stringing of the mighty bow of Śiva and the winning of Sītā by Rāma (Fig. 32), desired very much to know more of it from the mouth of Sītā herself and therefore expressed her eagerness to know all about what happened. Sītā explained at length her miraculous appearance from the earth, her celestical beauty and impossible perfection in form and spirit that made Janaka choose a way of giving her away as a bride worthy of her rare perfection. He imposed the condition of the stringing the great bow of Śiva vouchsafed to him by Varuṇa. Janaka's proclamation brought the princes to peep at the bow, but alas! only to assure themselves that even in a dream they could not even move it in the least, not to talk of lifting and stringing it and so, a whole princely congregation, anxious but disappointed, had bowed to the bow and quietly left in despair, till Rāma came on the scene so very long after, along with Viśvāmitra to witness the sacrifice performed by her father, where the bow was shown to the two princes to satisfy their curiosity to have a look at it. But in a minute the heroic hand of Rāma not only took it up and strung it, but in the twinkling of a moment, it was broken into two. Janaka, true to his word, immediately took up the water vessel, to empty it on Rāma's hand to gift her to Rāma as his bride. But, the wonder was that even as she was offered, Rāma would not accept her without knowing the mind of his father, the lord of Ayodhyā, and so, her father-in-law, the aged Daśaratha, was immediately invited by Janaka, and it was only on his assent that the wedlock was finalised (Fig. 33 and 34). It is such a wonder for Sītā, but nevertheless a pride as well, that her husband was not easily lured by

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The married princes and brides welcomed in Daśaratha's palace at Ayodhyā and bowing to Kausalyā, Cuḍḍapah school, 18th century A.D., Hyderabad Museum, Hyderabad.

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even the charm of the goddess of prosperity herself than which her own beauty was not a whit less, as she was celestial in charm, and as Śrī herself almost incarnated as Vālmīki has it (Fig. 35 and 36):

देवताभिः समा रूपे सीता श्रीरिव रूपिणी ।

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 77, 30

Sītā śrīr iva rūpiṇī of Vālmīki is aptly elaborated by Venkaṭanātha, who describes her in the words of Rāma in separation, as dear to him like his eye, as she appeared the very goddess of prosperity, possessing the treasure of the emotion of love, with eyes sparkling like the *śapharī* fish, chiselled brows, lovely in her curly tresses, slim, high-bosomed, of burnished golden hue, in the bloom of youth, in gait so charming as a swan, attenuated in her waist, and perfect in the disposition of every limb:

सा मे दृष्टिः शफरनयना सन्नतभ्रूः सुकेशी तन्वी तुङ्गस्तनभरनता तप्तजाम्बूनदाभा ।
बाला युष्मत्प्रतिमगमना वेदिमध्या वराङ्गी शृङ्गाराख्यं निधिमधिगता श्रेयसीदेवतेव ॥

Haṁsasandeśa 2, 10

Rāma's own appraisal of Sītā's beauty touches the peak, when he says that he is not surprised at the fierce discharge of the arrows of flowery-arrowed Cupid on him so much, as his wonder if he would shoot the arrows on himself, if only he happened to see the rare gem of Sītā's fair form:

चित्रीयते तन्न यदात्मयोनेस्तीव्रा मयि व्याहृतिरायुधानाम् ।
कुर्वीत सीताऽऽकृति वीक्ष्य रत्नं पुष्पायुधः स्वात्मनि शस्त्रपातान् ॥

Jānakīharaṇa 7, 18

Kshemendra calls such beauty the pleasance of Cupid, her slim creeper-like form ravishing, her bosom entrancing, her very look enthralling:

हारिणी सा तनुलता हारिणी च कुचस्थली ।
दृष्टिश्च हारिणी तस्या बभौ स्मरविहारिणी ॥

Samayamātṛikā 7, 12

And Sītā makes all this detailed account so vivid to acquaint Anasūyā of not only the triumph of her beauty, but the greater

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triumph of Rāma's attitude towards *dharma* wherefore the parent's wish even in the choice of his partner in life was to be absolutely respected:

असंचाल्यं मनुष्यैश्च यत्नेनापि च गौरवात् ।
तन्न शक्ता नमयितुं स्वप्नेष्वपि नराधिपाः ॥
तद्धनुः प्राप्य मे पित्रा व्याहृतं सत्यवादिना ।
समवाये नरेन्द्राणां पूर्वमामन्त्र्य पार्थिवान् ॥
इदं च धनुरुद्यम्य सज्यं यः कुरुते नरः ।
तस्य मे दुहिता भार्या भविष्यति न संशयः ॥
तच्च दृष्ट्वा धनुः श्रेष्ठं गौरवाद् गिरिसंनिभम् ।
अभिवाद्य नृपा जग्मुरशक्तास्तस्य तोलने ॥
सुदीर्घस्याथ कालस्य राघवोऽयं महाद्युतिः ।
विश्वामित्रेण सहितो यज्ञं द्रष्टुं समागतः ॥...
निमेषांतरमात्रेण तदानम्य स वीर्यवान् ।
ज्यां समारोप्य झडिति पूरयामास वीर्यवान् ॥
तेन पूरयता वेगं मध्ये भग्नं द्विधा धनुः ।
तस्य शब्दोऽभवद्भीमः पतितस्याशनेरिव ॥
ततोऽहं तत्र रामाय पित्रा सत्याभिसंधिना ।
निश्चिता दातुमुद्यम्य जलभाजनमुत्तमम् ॥
दीयमानां न तु तदा प्रतिजग्राह राघवः ।
अविज्ञाय पितुच्छन्दमयोध्याधिपतेः प्रभोः ॥
ततः श्वशुरमामन्त्र्य वृद्धं दशरथं नृपन् ।
मम पित्रा त्वहं दत्ता रामाय विदितात्मने ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 118, 40-44, 48-52

It is no wonder that to Rāma, of such lofty character unassailed even by the most extraordinary physical attraction, Sītā could herself remark 'falsehood is impossible in you, never was nor ever can be even a desire for ravishing feminine beauty in other than your own spouse, which is a sure destroyer of *dharma*:

मिथ्यावाक्यं न ते भूतं न भविष्यति राघव ।
कुतोऽभिलषणं स्त्रीणां परेषां धर्मनाशनम् ॥
तव नास्ति मनुष्येन्द्र न चाभूत्ते कदाचन ।

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 10, 4-5

This is such a significant passage that Kshemendra repeats it in his version of it; falsehood, loss of character and cruelty towards

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living beings are the three most detestable crimes and are entirely opposed to action calculated to merit fame. In your case, falsehood can have no genesis in you, and equally so, how can there be the impossible disaster of your noblest traits making up your character? I can only remark that your present cruelty towards the *rākshasas* who have not provoked you is probably unjustified:

> असत्यं शोकविरहः प्राणहिंसा च देहिनाम् ॥
> प्रकृष्टं पातकं प्रहुर्न यशः कर्मदोहदम् ।
> जन्मापूर्वमसत्यं ते शीलध्वंसस्य का कथा ॥
> सांप्रतं निर्विकारेषु हिंसा रक्षःसु नोचिता ॥

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 2, 418-419

Again the nobility of Rāma is seen in two extraordinary events, first when he speaks in a rather severe tone to Sītā when she is brought after his victory over Rāvaṇa. The most pathetic scenes in the *Rāmāyaṇa* are those of the lament of Rāma on separation from Sītā whom he loved ever so much and who was all the time constantly in his mind. Rāma is so infatuated, that, unable to find her when he returns, after all his fastidious search in the hermitage and the neighbourhood, with his eyes red and swollen by grief, running from one tree to the other, from one hillock to another, pitiably lamenting, caught in almost an ocean of mire and slowly sinking in it, begs as he sees the *kadaṁba* tree whether, fond of *kadaṁba* flowers and being so close to it, whether the tree had a message to give of her, asking of the *bilva* tree, thick in its shade of leaves whether it had seen Sītā clad in yellow silk, or whether the *arjuna* tree of whose flowers Sītā was so fond was seen by it, or the *kakubha* tree rich in its sprouts and flowers, whether the *tilaka* which flowers also Sītā loved so much and which was ringing with the hum of swarms of bees had noticed Sītā, or the *aśoka*, the *karṇikāra*, or the mango, or the *nīpa* or the *bakula*, or the *punnāga*, and not only the trees but even the animals like the deer, as he sees them, remembering his own deer-eyed beloved, the elephant, remembering her shapely thighs resembling the well-shaped proboscis, almost gone mad by his intense passion for his spouse so beloved. Such a Rāma, to think of Sītā as a nobody in the face of his great act of *dharma*, when, in spite of himself and his full knowledge of her innocence, he could set an example

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and make the world understand that character and a fair name were higher than anything else in this world, even life itself, and speak to Sītā in such a way that she determines immediately to put an end to her life by entering the fire, is indeed a triumph of character:

यत्नान्मृगयमानस्तु नाससाद वने प्रियाम् ।
शोकरक्तेक्षणः शोकादुन्मत्त इव लक्ष्यते ।।
वृक्षाद्वृक्षं प्रधावन् स गिरेश्चाद्रिं नदान्नदीम् ।
बभूव विलपन् रामः शोकपङ्कार्णवाप्लुतः ।।
अपि कच्चित्त्वया दृष्टा सा कदम्बप्रिया प्रिया ।
कदम्ब यदि जानीषे शंस सीतां शुभाननाम् ।।
स्निग्धपल्लवसंकाशा पीतकौशेयवासिनी ।
शंसस्व यदि वा द्रष्टा बिल्व बिल्वोपमस्तनी ।।
अथवार्जुन शंस त्वं प्रियां तामर्जुनप्रियाम् ।
जनकस्य सुता भीरुर्यदि जीवति वा व वा ।।...
अथ वा मृगशावाक्षी मृग जानासि मैथिलीम् ।
मृगविप्रेक्षणी कान्ता मृगीभिः सहिता भवेत् ।।
गज सा गजनासोरूर्यदि दृष्टा त्वया भवेत् ।
तां मन्ये विदितां तुभ्यमाख्याहि वरवारण ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 60, 10-14, 23-24

It is a wonder indeed that Rāma, frantically searching for her everywhere, and unable to find her, enquires even of the river Godāvarī and addresses the *Vanadevatās* (Fig. 37) and, finally, is so disappointed by the utter silence of the atmosphere of the sylvan surroundings that could give him no clue to the whereabouts of Sītā, that the intensity of his grief shoots up into an amazing unprecedented blaze of anger in which he makes a statement terrible beyond description. His ire is aroused almost with *dharma* itself for not having protected her. 'Poor Sītā is either stolen or killed, or gobbled up, and alas! *dharma* has not protected her when carried away or eaten up. What are those gods who could dare do me this harm. All the beings in this world unknowingly treat insultingly without understanding, even the very creator of the universe, the most mighty, and of the utmost compassion. The celestial lords of the world probably think of me as powerless, just because I am so soft, ever intent on the welfare of the world, restrained, and so full of compassion. How sad O Lakshmaṇa! that this great quality of mine has itself turned out to be my

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disability and blemish. Now, and this very moment, I shall put an end to everything, annihilate the *rākshasas*, supress the cool silver shine of the moon, blaze forth like the sun, suppress all my desirable qualities, allowing only my heroic lustre to shine, and allow no *yakshas* or *gandharvas* or *piśāchas, rākshasas*, nor *kinnaras* nor even human beings to have any taste of happiness! Look! I shall fill the entire sky with my arrows and barricade every passage of the celestials stopping the movement of any in any of the three worlds. I will control the planets, cover up the moon, destroy the fire, stop the blow of the wind, and put an end to the lustre of even the sun, blow up the mountains and their peaks, dry up the lakes, fell the trees and the creepers, destroy the ocean, render the entire expanse of the three worlds one deluge, if the mighty celestials render not to me my Sītā unhurt':

हृता मृता वा सीता सा भक्षिता वा तपस्विनी ।
न धर्मस्त्रायते सीतां ह्रियमाणां महावने ।
भक्षितायां हि वैदेह्यां हृतायामपि लक्ष्मण ।
के हि लोकेऽप्रियं कर्तुं शक्ताः सौम्य ममेश्वराः ॥
कर्तारमपि लोकानां शूरं करुणवेदिनम् ।
अज्ञानादवमन्येरन् सर्वभूतानि लक्ष्मण ॥
मृदुं लोकहिते युक्तं दान्तं करुणवेदिनम् ।
निर्वीर्यमिति मन्यन्ते नूनं मां त्रिदशेश्वराः ॥
मां प्राप्य हि गुणो दोषः संवृत्तः पश्य लक्ष्मण ।
अद्यैव सर्वभूतानां रक्षसामभवाय च ॥
संहृत्यैव शशिज्योत्स्नां महान् सूर्य इवोदितः ।
संहृत्यैव गुणान् सर्वान् मम तेजः प्रकाशये ॥
नैव यक्षा न गन्धर्वा न पिशाचा न राक्षसाः ।
किन्नरा वा मनुष्या वा सुखं प्राप्यन्ति लक्ष्मण ॥
ममास्त्रबाणसंपूर्णमाकाशं पश्य लक्ष्मण ।
निःसंपातं करिष्यामि ह्यद्य त्रैलोक्यचारिणम् ।
संविरुद्धग्रहगणमावारितनिशाकरम् ।
विप्रनष्टानलमरुद्भास्करद्युतिसंवृतम् ॥
विनिर्मथितशैलाग्रं शुष्यमाणजलाशयम् ।
ध्वस्तद्रुमलतागुल्मं विप्रणाशितसागरम् ॥
त्रैलोक्यं तु करिष्यामि संयुक्तं कालधर्मणा ।
न तां कुशलिनीं सीतां प्रदास्यन्ति यदीश्वराः ॥

Rāmāyāṇa 3, 64, 53-63

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Rāma has even to be almost brought to his senses from the zenith of his grief nearly bordering on madness. Lakshmaṇa reminds him, 'you should not destroy the universe for punishing the act of one. The rulers who are most powerful to act are the softest and the most patient. You are the very refuge of every being on earth and are the ultimate protection to all. Who in this world would approve or justify the loss of your beloved wife? Neither the streams, nor the ocean, nor the mountains, the celestials or the *gandharvas*, or even the demons are equal to the task of harming you, like the gentle ones who could never injure the sacrifices. We should therefore make a search for her and not act rashly (Fig. 38):

नैकस्य तु कृते लोकान् विनाशयितुमर्हसि ।
युक्तदण्डा हि मृदवः प्रशान्ता वसुधाधिपाः ॥
सदा त्वं सर्वभूतानां शरण्यः परमा गतिः ॥
कोऽनु दारप्रणाशं ते साधु मन्येत राघव ॥
सरितः सागराः शैला देवगन्धर्वदानवाः ।
नालं ते विप्रियं कर्तुं दीक्षितस्येव साधवः ॥
येन राजन् हृता सीता तमन्वेषितुमर्हसि ।

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 65, 9-12

It is that Rāma who, again, even at the seashore, as he had reached the fringe of the ocean, at the far end of which was Laṅkā, calls on the southern wind, and exclaims 'O! gentle wind! that have blown and touched soothingly my beloved one on the other side, blow on me, let me have your touch on my body! Let me have this joy as of sight cooled by moonlight! It burns my limbs indeed, like poison drunk, to recall how my beloved one could have called and cried for me, 'O my lord' as she was carried away. Night and day, my body is roasted in that flame of passion, the fuel of which is my unfortunate separation from her, and the mounting flames my incessant thought of her misery:

वाहि वात यतः कान्ता तां स्पृष्ट्वा मामपि स्पृश ।
त्वयि मे गात्रसंस्पर्शश्चन्द्रे दृष्टिसमागमः ॥
तन्मे दहति गात्राणि विषं पीतमिवाशये ।
हा नाथेति प्रिया सा मां ह्रियमाणा यदब्रवीत् ॥
तद्वियोगेन्धनवता तच्चिन्ताविपुलार्चिषा ।
रात्रिन्दिनं शरीरं मे दह्यते मदनाग्निना ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 5, 6-8

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Rāma, as put by another poet, desires to have his limbs embraced only by that breeze that has had the touch of the body of his beloved, soft as the *śirīsha* flower, as otherwise he would have it quit at once.

अंङ्गं यदि प्रियायाः स्पृष्टं भवता शिरीषसुकुमारम् ।
तर्ह्यालिङ्ग ममाङ्गान्यपसर तूर्णं न चेत्पवन ॥

Unmattarāghava 21.

It is that same Rāma, for whom *dharma* was so high, and who had the highest concept of a righteous king as would set an example of action and character, that tells Sītā, brought to his presence, not in the sad and pitiable condition in which she was in the Aśoka grove, but fresh after a bath, decked in jewels and arrayed in robes against her will, but just in deference to the command of Rāma on the manner in which she was to appear before him, completely unmoved by her unparalleled beauty and even by her highest and noblest character, which was only too well known to him, and deeply fixed in his mind, that not only spoke harshly to her, but even as he was looking on allowed her to enter the fire. The fire itself had to be afraid of it, and all the celestials, the highest and the lowliest even among them, assembled to witness this unique wonder, including even Daśaratha himself from heaven, and to exclaim 'how is it O Rāma! like a common and ignorant man in the street, completely insensible of all sense of propriety, you look on in utter disregard the daughter of the noble lord of Videha. You are the lord of the universe and we, that are only the guardians of the quarters have to remind you of it (Fig. 39 and 40):

उपेक्षसे च वैदेहीं मानुषः प्राकृतो यथा ।
इत्युक्तो लोकपालैस्तैः स्वामी लोकस्य राघवः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa, 6, 120, 10

As Brahmā spoke explaining the personality of Rāma himself and his beloved Sītā, the fire god sprang up from the flames, holding out Sītā as an offering to Rāma, the flower garlands on her fresh as ever, as well as her jewels, and her surpassing beauty, and all these matching only her dignity, as she rose. And the celestials, the witnesses of the world in all its activity, addressed Rāma to

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tell him how immaculate was Sītā, a captive in Rāvaṇa's household, with her mind ever on Rāma, helpless, tormented by separation from her beloved, frightened by a troop of ogresses surrounding her, alternately cajoled and frightened, but ever steadfast in the only thought on which her mind concentrated, Rāma and none else. She is pure, unblemished, receive her back. Oh! scion of Raghu's family! This is not only what I tell you but is my command as well' said Brahmā. Rāma, glad at heart but overwelmed by grief, stood for a while in silent contemplation, his eyes filled with tears, his mind ever on *dharma*, lustrous and heroic, spoke as the foremost exponent of *dharma* 'Certainly Sītā is the most flawless in the three worlds, but for ever so long, she was kept in Rāvaṇa's palace. If I had taken her back without testing her purity, even good people on earth would have said that Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, infatuated and passionate and hence unbecoming in his behaviour, has taken her back. Though I know that she is single-minded in her devotion to me, entirely acting in unison with my wish, for creating faith in the three worlds, and wedded to truth as I am, I could even suffer Sītā's entering the fire:

स विधूय चितां तां तु वैदेहीं हव्यवाहनः ।
उत्तस्थौ मूर्तिमानाशु गृहीत्वा जनकात्मजाम् ।।
तरुणादित्यसङ्काशां तप्तकाञ्चनभूषणाम् ।
रक्ताम्बरधरां बालां नीलकुञ्चितमूर्धजाम् ।।
अक्लिष्टमालाभरणां तथारूपां मनस्विनीम् ।
ददौ रामाय वैदेहीमंके कृत्वा विभावसुः ।।
अब्रवीच्च तदा रामं साक्षी लोकस्य पावकः ।
एषा ते राम वैदेही पापमस्यां न विद्यते ।।......
ततः प्रीतमना रामः श्रुत्वैतद्वदतां वरः ।
दध्यौ मुहूर्तं धर्मात्मा बाष्पव्याकुललोचनः ।।
एवमुक्तो महातेजा द्युतिमान् दृढविक्रमः ।
अब्रवीत्त्रिदशश्रेष्ठं रामो धर्मभृतां वरः ।।
अवश्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु न सीता पापमर्हति ।
दीर्घकालोषिता ह्रीयं रावणान्तःपुरे शुभा ।।
बालिशः खलु कामात्मा रामो दशरथात्मजः ।
इति वक्ष्यन्ति मां सन्तो जानकीमविशोध्य हि ।।
अनन्यहृदयां भक्तां मच्चित्तपरिवर्तिनीम् ।
अहमप्यवगच्छामि मैथिलीं जनकात्मजाम् ।।

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प्रत्ययार्थं तु लोकानां त्रयाणां सत्यसंश्रयः ।
उपेक्षे चापि वैदेहीं प्रविशन्तीं हुताशनम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 121, 2-5; 11-16

The words uttered with one accord by the celestials assembled on high and Rāma's reply thereto in Sundareśvara's poem cannot escape attention, 'O Lord! hero of the Raghus! how is it you do not yourself the Supreme Being realise your own self, the encompassing spirit of the universe that you are, and how do you view unconcerned the daughter of Videha falling into the fire like sacrificial libation holy by the utterance of hymns!

किं नावगच्छसि विभो जगदन्तरात्मन्नात्मानमद्य रघुवीर परात्मरूपम् ।
आज्याहुतिं निपतितामिव मन्त्रपूतामग्नौ विदेहतनयां किमुपेक्षसे त्वम् ॥

Sundararāmāyaṇa 14, 32

O! lord of libations! I know indeed the character, noble family and conjugal devotion of this miraculously born one, yet I had to almost appear indifferent to her to repel calumny from common folk by setting an example:

शीलं कुलञ्च पतिभक्तिमयोनिजाया जानामि हव्यवह तामनवद्यशीलाम् ।
सामान्यलोकपरिवादनिवारणाय सैषान्वकारि हि मया समुपेक्षितेव ॥

Sundararāmāyaṇa 14, 46

The other instance is, again where Rāma had just begun a happy life as the sovereign of the earth with Sītā as his queen, yet, would still set an example to the world in his act of virtue, placing duty above everything else, and abandon Sītā, not because of the slightest blemish in her, but only because, as the sovereign of the earth, he should not have a word said by even the lowliest, that his high position was used to cover any tarnished act. He was fully aware of the fact that the common folk would follow the example set by the highest and the best, even as Kṛishṇa has it in the *Gītā*:

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

Bhagavadgītā 3, 21

Rāma in one of his conversations with his friends, insists on

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knowing from them all that was talked about in the town or in the country outside, questions again and again to know the truth of how his people felt of his rule, his life, his conduct and so forth. His only desire was to keep his people happy. When he learns of the wonder that they expressed about the exploits of their noble king, even the laying of the bridge on the ocean (Fig. 41) unheard of anywhere even among the celestials, and finally this delicate question of the magnitude of the passion that Rāma could entertain in his heart for enjoying Sītā instead of detesting her, how he could bring her back who was carried away by Rāvaṇa by force to his far off island and kept in the Aśoka grove, and grumbling that now they would have to put up with whatever their wives did, as what the ruler did, the ruled had to follow as an example set. Rāma feels so upset over this that he immediately makes up his mind, calls his brothers, all of them, explains his position in clear terms, Lakshmaṇa himself having being a witness of her entry into the fire and her return unscathed, and the entire divine demonstration of her immaculate character, and finally, just because he did not want that his great and noble family should be spoken of lightly, or an example, however misunderstood, ruin the whole kingdom in its action as a reaction to his act, he decides and commands Lakshmaṇa to conduct Sītā the very next morning and abandon her on the bank of the river Gaṅgā in the vicinity of Vālmīki's hermitage, as Sītā had, in her then state of pregnancy, expressed a fond desire to visit the penance groves and hermitage of sages near the river that she loved so well.

हत्वा च रावणं संख्ये सीतामाहृत्य राघवः ।
अमर्षं पृष्ठतः कृत्वा स्ववेश्य पुनरानयत् ॥
कीदृशं हृदये तस्य सीतासम्भोगजं सुखम् ।
अंकमारोप्य तु पुरा रावणेन बलाद्धृताम् ॥
लंकामपि पुरा नीतामशोकवनिकां गताम् ।
रक्षसां वशमापन्नां कथं रामो न कुत्सते ॥
अस्माकमपि दारेषु सहनीयं भविष्यति ।
यथा हि कुरुते राजा प्रजा तमनुवर्तते ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 43, 16-20

जानासि त्वं यथा सौम्य दण्डके विजने वने ।
रावणेन हृता सीता स च विध्वंसितो मया ॥

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तत्र मे बुद्धिरुत्पन्ना जनकस्य सुतां प्रति ।
अत्रोषितामिमां सीतामानयेयं कथं पुरीम् ।।
प्रत्ययार्थं ततः सीता विवेश ज्वलनं तदा ।
प्रत्यक्षं तव सौमित्रे देवानां हव्यवाहनः ।।
अपापां मैथिलीमाह वायुश्चाकाशगोचरः ।
चन्द्रादित्यौ च शंसेते सुराणां सन्निधौ पुरा ।।
ऋषीणां चैव सर्वेषांमपापां जनकात्मजाम् ।
एवं शुद्धसमाचारा देवगन्धर्वसन्निधौ ।।
लंकाद्वीपे महेन्द्रेण मम हस्ते निवेशिता ।
अन्तरात्मा च मे वेत्ति सीतां शुद्धां यशस्विनीम् ।।
ततो गृहीत्वा वैदेहीमयोध्यामहमागतः ।
अयं तु मे महान् वादः शोकश्च हृदि वर्तते ।।
पौरापवादः सुमहांस्तथा जनपदस्य च ।
अकीर्तिर्यस्य गीयेत लोके भूतस्य कस्य चित् ।।
पतत्येवाधमान् लोकान् यावच्छब्दः प्रकीर्त्यते ।
अकीर्तिर्निन्द्यते देवैः कीर्तिलोकेषु पूज्यते ।।
कीर्त्यर्थं तु समारम्भः सर्वेषां सुमहात्मनाम् ।
अप्यहं जीवितं जह्यां युष्मान् वा पुरुषर्षभाः ।।
अपवादभयाद्भीतः किं पुनर्जनकात्मजाम ।
तस्माद्भवन्तः पश्यन्तु पतितं शोकसागरे ।।
न हि पश्याम्यहं भूतं किंचिद्दुखःमतोऽधिकम् ।
श्वस्त्वं प्रभाते सौमित्रे सुमन्त्राधिष्ठितं रथम् ।।
आरुह्य सीतामारोप्य विषयान्ते समुत्सृज ।
गङ्गायास्तु परे पारे वाल्मीकेस्तु महात्मनः ।।
आश्रमो दिव्यसंकाशस्तमसातीरमाश्रितः ।
तत्रैनां विजने देशे विसृज्य रघुनन्दन ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 45, 5-18

Rāma is so attuned to *dharma*, and his outlook on everything is so objective and unbiassed, strictly adhering to the highest principles of virtuous perception, that he would completely eliminate his own preference for good or bad, ruling it out at every stage. Even from his childhood his perception is a true one. He sees the right and the wrong of everything and guides not only his juniors but sometimes even his elders who, as circumstances required, may have to be respectfully reminded of a correction in their outlook and opinion in any vital matter.

We can take an instance. Bhavabhūti highlights this trait of

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Rāma in a situation that is purely his own creation in his *Mahāvīra-charita*, but which, nevertheless, shows the dispassionate outlook and judgement of Rāma. It is a situation where Kuśadhvaja, younger brother of Janaka, with his nieces Sītā and Ūrmilā, is in the company of Viśvāmitra, accompanied by Rāma and Lakshmaṇa, when Sarvamāya, an aged rākshasa, arrives on behalf of Rāvaṇa to demand the hand of Sītā in wedlock for the lord of the rākshasas. The very mention of the name of the rākshasa creates a disgust in the mind of Śitā and Urmilā. King Kuśadhvaja and Viśvāmitra who would not be discourteous allow him to be ushered into their presence, and the rākshasa announces the demand of Rāvaṇa. Lakshmaṇa is taken aback and, aside, remarks to Rāma, 'Look my brother, this lord of the night-prowlers longs for this divine damsel'. Rāma's reply to this is 'A girl yet unmarried is a common object of longing for any to ask for, without let or hindrance; and there is all the more a claim for the victor of the world, who is the great grandson of Brahmā himself'. Lakshmaṇa at once remonstrates. 'It is your excessive goodness, my brother, that you express admiration for even our natural mortal enemy, this night-prowler, the one who destroyed the three *Vedas*, lowered the lustrous prestige of the Kshatriya race, and killed the saintly king Anaraṇya of our Ikshvāku family'. Rāma replies, 'As an enemy he may necessarily be one who could be killed, but he should not be spoken of as if he were just a low commoner when his penance is in an abundance beyond measure, his heroic valour most uncommon and his stature lofty as a hero'. Lakshmaṇa at once retorts, 'What is his heroism when he has not the character of a great hero'. Rāma again corrects his brother Lakshmaṇa. 'What could we say in justification for it that, though learned and well-informed in the right and wrong of things, he had fallen from the path of virtue and behaved thus towards so great a one as Anaraṇya, except that we should ignore it. It is indeed impossible to have all good qualities in one single person. But let us consider his great valour, his conquest of the entire universe without a single obstacle except the son of Jamadagni (Paraśurāma) who had almost in sport won easy victory over even the six-faced Kārtikeya. Who else could boast of such heroic valour?' Herein lies the greatness of Rāma, that he could foget a thousand blemishes but appreciate one outstanding virtue if ever he beheld it anywhere. He could even forgive Rāvaṇa who killed Anaraṇya, his own ancestor, in his action

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that was unworthy of a hero, specially as the aged king was engaged in a sacrifice and was for the time of the essence of Iśvara himself as *yajamāna.* His boastful challenge calling him to fight knowing full well that he was aged and saintly, and as sacrificer not free to fight, though representing the best of Kshatriya blood, was wholly unjust. Yet Rāma would only see the good in others. It is even as Śiva would suppress poison in his throat and proclaim to the world the cool and soothing light of the moon by placing him prominently on his crest:

गुणदोषौ बुधो गृह्णन्निन्दुक्ष्वेलाविवेश्वरः ।
शिरसा धारयत्येकं परं कण्ठे नियच्छति ।

Kuvalayānanda p.6.

Follies are not proclaimed and are suppressed unexpressed in the throat itself, but merit is acclaimed by placing it high on the head and almost worshipping it. Rāma is ever noted for this noble trait.

न स्मरत्यपकाराणां शतमप्यात्मवत्तया ।

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 1,11

लक्ष्मणः —(जनान्तिकम्) आर्य किं न पश्यसि निशाचरपतिर्देवीमिमां प्रार्थयते ।
रामः—वत्स ! साधारण्यान्निरातङ्कः कन्यामन्योऽपि याचते ।
किं पुनर्जगतां जेता प्रपौत्रः परमेष्ठिनः ॥
लक्ष्मणः—अतिसौजन्यादार्यस्य तस्मिन्नपि निसर्गवैरिणि निशाचरे बहुमानः ।
यो नस्त्रयीपरिध्वंसात् क्षात्रं तेजोऽपकर्षति ।
ऐक्ष्वाकं यश्च राजर्षिमनरण्यं किलावधीत् ।
रामः—शत्रुरिति कामं वध्यः स्यान्न पुनरप्रमेयतपसंमतिवीरमप्राकृतं प्राकृतवदर्हसि व्यपदेष्टुम् ।
लक्ष्मणः—निरस्तवीरपुरुषाचारस्य का तस्य वीरता ।
रामः—वत्स ! मा मैवम् । यद्विद्वानपि तादृशेऽप्यभिजने धर्म्यात्पथो विच्युतः
कि ब्रूमोऽत्र तदन्यदेव न वसन्त्येकत्र सर्वे गुणाः ।
लीलानिर्जितषण्मुखाद्भगवतः श्रीजामदग्न्यादृते
निर्विघ्नप्रतिपन्नविश्वविजयो वीरस्तु कस्तादृशः ॥

Mahāvīracharita 1, 31-33

It is this magnanimity of Rāma that Kālidāsa so effectively describes when he makes Rāma fight Rāvaṇa not with a contempt as the thief that stole his dear wife, but as a great hero of whom he thought highly, as the victor of the Lords of the quarters, as the

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devotee par excellence that offered his own cut heads to Śiva (Fig 42) and as the mighty armed that shook even Kailāsa mount itself (Fig. 43):

जेतारं लोकपालानां स्वमुखैरार्चितेश्वरम् ।
रामस्तुलितकैलासमरातिं बह्वमन्यत ॥

Raghuvaṃśa 12, 89

We can take other instances of the same trait in Rāma when he tries to correct the views of others, both his juniors and elders. When Lakshmaṇa exclaims to Kausalyā, that he could see none in this world, who could, even behind the back of Rāma, think ill of him, even his enemy or even one abandoned by him would still never speak ill of him, or be able to find any demerit. How and on what account and in pursuit of what *dharma* could his father abandon such a son, almost divine, straightforward, restrained, beloved even to his enemies, he was at a loss to know. But Rāma immediately corrects him and tells his mother, who also draws attention to his knowledge of *dharma*, and insists on his obeying her wish as that of the mother, that he should stay with her or allow her to go with him. 'I have no power to transgress father's words. With my head on your feet I bow and request you that I must be allowed to go to the forest'. He appeases Lakshmaṇa so roused to anger as to go to the extent of saying 'even a parent autocratic and ignorant of right and wrong in action, and treading the path of sin should be arrested'. Rāma reiterates. '*Dharma* is the highest in the world. Truth is established in *dharma* and father's action is based on this *dharma* and thus arises his word that I should go to the forest. Father is truthful, ever wedded to it, his highest valour is adherence to truth. Father is afraid of only one thing, the evil that could follow him to the other world by his swerving from truth. I must free my father from that dreadful fear'. Rāma advises Kausalyā also. 'You should not abandon father either and come with me: abandoning the husband is the most cruel act on the part of a woman. You should not even in thought act so detestably. So long as father is alive, you should, all attention, look after him. This is an ageold *dharma*, and the greatest. Bharata is also of the very essence of *dharma* and sweet to every living being. He would indeed satisfy your every wish, as he is ever wedded to *dharma*:

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न तं पश्याम्यहं लोके परोक्षमपि यो नरः ।
स्वमित्रोऽपि निरस्तोऽपि योऽस्य दोषमुदाहरेत् ॥
देवकल्पमृजुं दान्तं रिपूणामपि वत्सलम् ।
अवेक्षमाणः को धर्मं त्यजेत्पुत्रमकारणात् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 21, 5-6

नास्ति शक्तिः पितुर्वाक्यं समतिक्रमितुं मम ।
प्रसादये त्वां शिरसा गन्तुमिच्छाम्यहं वनम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 21, 30

गुरोरप्यवलिप्तस्य कार्याकार्यमजानतः ।
उत्पथं प्रतिपन्नस्य कार्यं भवति शासनम् ॥
धर्मो हि परमो लोके धर्मे सत्यं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
धर्मसंस्मृतमेतच्च पितुर्वचनमुत्तमम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 21, 41

सत्यः सत्याभिसन्धश्च नित्यं सत्यपराक्रमः ।
परलोकभयाद्भीतो निर्भयोऽस्तु पिता मम ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 22, 9

भर्तुः किल परित्यागो नृशंसो केवलं स्त्रियः ।
स भवत्या न कर्तव्यो मनसापि विगर्हितः ॥
यावज्जीवति काकुत्स्थः पिता मे जगतीपतिः ।
शुश्रूषा क्रियतां तावत् स हि धर्मः सनातनः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 24, 12-15

भरतश्चापि धर्मात्मा सर्वभूतप्रियंवदः ।
भवन्तीमनुवर्तेत स हि धर्मरतः सदा ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 24, 22-23

It is no wonder that against such wonderful exposition of *dharma* by Rāma, Kausalyā herself cannot but call on that *dharma* itself to protect him, and the very first utterance in her *svastyayana* for Rāma is 'may that *dharma* that you so assiduously ever protect take care of you':

यं पालयसि धर्मं त्वं धृत्या च नियमेन च ।
स वै राघवशार्दूल धर्मस्त्वामभिरक्षतु ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 25, 3

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Bharata in great grief places his version of understanding the *dharma* before Rāma and pleads that he should come to the rescue of the fair name and great character of Daśaratha which may have momentarily lapsed into an unworthy behaviour by his excessive emotion towards Kaikeyī, just to please the whim of a woman, as old age blurred his vision. I would not blame father, great as a parent, great in action, aged, and now no more. He is as a god unto me and I would not blame him in any assembly. Still, who could have done such an act of sin as this opposed to *dharma* and *artha* just to please a woman. Yet he himself was so learned in *dharma.* Judge this, Oh Rāma! as you are yourself learned in *dharma.* There is an old saying that approaching death blinds ones vision to all realities. Our father in doing what he did has clearly vindicated this belief. You should therefore look into this correctly, give up this illusion and determination. You should revert whatever have been father's lapses. That is the real offspring that straightens up the lapses of the parent. You should therefore protect all of us from this sin, my mother Kaikeyī, my father, my relatives and friends, all our citizens of Ayodhyā and all those from the entire empire, please protect us all. Where is this life in the forest and what is the life of a Kshatriya! Where are the locks of a sage and where is the act of protection by a ruler! You should not resolve on this unbecoming act. The first act of a Kshatriya king is to get crowned, by which alone as a king you could with all your wisdom protect the subjects. Who would abandon this immediate action which is clearly and perceptibly ones duty, to pursue the life of a saint, the fruit of which lies beyond the ken of this vision? In learning, in my order of birth, in my position in every way, I am just a boy compared to you. How can I protect this earth, when you are there who could do it best? A boy is just immature in his knowledge and qualities. You should also remove the infamy of my mother and protect our revered father from a great sin. With my head on your feet I beg of you to please be compassionate towards me and towards all our people, like Śiva towards all beings; but if you refuse this, and are determined only on dwelling in the forest, I shall also go along with you:

गुरुः क्रियावान् वृद्धश्च राजा प्रेतः पितेति च ।
तातं न परिगर्हेयं दैवतं चेति संसदि ॥
को हि धर्मार्थयोर्हीनमीदृशं कर्म किल्विषम् ।
स्त्रियाः प्रियं चिकीर्षुः सन् कुर्याद्धर्मज्ञ धर्मवित् ॥

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अन्तकाले हि भूतानि मुह्यन्तीति पुरा श्रुतिः ।
राज्ञैवं कुर्वता लोके प्रत्यक्षं सा श्रुतिः कृता ॥
साध्वर्थमभिसन्धाय क्रोधान्मोहाच्च साहसात् ।
तातस्य यदतिक्रान्तं पुत्रो यः साधु मन्यते ॥
तदपत्यं मतं लोके विपरीतमतोऽन्यथा ।
तदपत्यं भवानस्तु मा भवान् दुष्कृतं पितुः ॥
अभिपत्ता कृतं कर्म लोके धीरविगर्हितम् ।
कैकेयीं मां च तातं च सुहृदो बान्धवांश्च नः ॥
पौरजानपदान् सर्वांस्त्रातु सर्वमिदं भवान् ।
क्व चारण्यं क्व च क्षात्रं क्व जटाः क्व च पालनम् ॥
ईदृशं व्याहतं कर्म न भवान् कर्तुमर्हति ।
एष हि प्रथमो धर्मः क्षत्रियस्याभिषेचनम् ॥
येन शक्यं महाप्राज्ञ प्रजानां परिपालनन् ।
कश्च प्रत्यक्षमुत्सृज्य संशयस्थमलक्षणम् ॥......
श्रुतेन बालः स्थानेन जन्मना भवतो ह्यहम् ।
स कथं पालयिष्यामि भूमिं भवति तिष्ठति ॥
हीनबुद्धिगुणो बालो हीनः स्थानेन चाप्यहम् ॥......
आक्रोशं मम मातुश्च प्रमृज्य पुरुषर्षभ ।
अद्य तत्रभवन्तं च पितरं रक्ष किल्बिषात् ॥
शिरसा त्वभियाचेऽहं कुरुष्व करुणां मयि ।
बान्धवेषु च सर्वेषु भूतेष्विव महेश्वरः ॥
अथैतत् पृष्ठतः कृत्वा वनमेव भवानितः ।
गमिष्यति गमिष्यामि भवता सार्धमप्यहम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 106. 11-20, 23-24, 30-33

In reply to this, Rāma has a wonderful exposition of the right and wrong in action in the light of *dharma*. In the battle between the gods and the demons, the king, our father, pleased with Kaikeyī, gave her two boons. Reminding him of them your mother of immense charm had asked that noblest among men, our father, your coronation and my banishment. The king, bound by his promise, had to grant her both; and on the bidding of our father I am here in the forest for fourteen years in accordance with the boon. You should also accept the other and render our father's word truthful by your speedily getting crowned. For my sake, you should please release our father from his debt of truthful utterance. Our father who knew *dharma* so well needs must be protected by you, and you should equally gladden your mother. There is an ancient saying about the fathers and forefathers sung by the famous Gaya in Gayā itself. The

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son is called *putra* as he saves the fathers from the hell called *put*. Hence, you should protect our father from that hell. Return to Ayodhyā and delight the people. Rule the earth with Śatrughna, aided by all the learned twiceborn. I shall without further loss of time enter the Daṇḍakā forest:

देवासुरे च संग्रामे जनन्यै तव पार्थिवः ।
संप्रहृष्टो ददौ राजा वरमाराधितः प्रभुः ।।
ततः स संप्रतिश्राव्य तव माता यशस्विनी ।
अयाचत नरश्रेष्ठं द्वौ वरौ वरवर्णिनी ।।
तव राज्यं नरव्याघ्र मम प्रव्रजनं तथा ।
तौ च राजा तदा तस्यै नियुक्तः प्रददौ वरौ ।।
तेन पित्राहमप्यत्र नियुक्तः पुरुषर्षभ ।
चतुर्दश वने वासं वर्षाणि वरदानिकम् ।।
सोऽहं वनमिदं प्राप्तो निर्जनं लक्ष्मणान्वितः ।
सीतया चाप्यतिद्वन्द्वः सत्यवादे स्थितः पितुः ।।
भवानपि तथेत्येव पितरं सत्यवादिनम् ।
कर्तुमर्हति राजेन्द्र क्षिप्रमेवाभिषेचनात् ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 107, 4-9

ऋणान्मोचय राजानं मत्कृते भरत प्रभुम् ।
पितरं त्राहि धर्मज्ञं मातरं चाभिनन्दय ।।
श्रूयते हि पुरा तात श्रुतिर्गीता यशस्विना ।
गयेन यजमानेन गयेष्वेव पितॄन् प्रति ।।
पुंनाम्नो नरकाद्यस्मात् पितरं त्रायते सुतः ।
तस्मात् पुत्र इति प्रोक्तः पितॄन् यः पाति सर्वतः ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 107, 10-12

एवं राजर्षयः सर्वे प्रतीता राजनन्दन ।
तस्मात् त्राहि नरश्रेष्ठ पितरं नरकात्प्रभो ।।
अयोध्यां गच्छ भरत प्रकृतीरनुरंजय ।
शत्रुघ्नसहितो वीर सह सर्वैर्द्विजातिभिः ।
प्रवेक्ष्ये दण्डकारण्यमहमप्यविलम्बयन् ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 107, 14-16

Bharata himself is astonished and wonders at the equanimity of Rāma, and even before he addresses Rāma to pursuade him to come back, he cannot help exclaiming, 'Who could be there in this world like you who could overcome all your enemies, even the strongest,

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but yet are unmoved and neither depressed by grief or elated by joy. You are most welcome to the oldest and the wisest, and it is those very ones that you enquire to resolve your doubts:

> को हि स्यादीदृशो लोके यादृशस्त्वमरिन्दम ।
> न त्वां प्रव्यथयेद्दुखं प्रीतिर्वा न प्रहर्षयेत् ॥
> संमतश्चासि वृद्धाणां तांश्च पृच्छासि संशयान् ।

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 106, 2-3

It is purely with the idea of winning over Rāma to come back to Ayodhyā that the great sage Jābāli had spoken in a strange manner, a philosphy that was totally obnoxious to Rāma. Very respectfully Rāma corrects him. As Rāma was the foremost among the truthful, with his mind untarnished by all that he had heard, and entirely in his own *dhārmik* opinion, Rāma speaks out to Jābāli. 'Reverend Sir, you had, for gaining your dear wish, my return, spoken to describe an act of blemish and unworthy as the thing to be done and as good in itself. One whose act is unworthy and sinful taints his character and loses all respect in this world. Whether born of a high or low family, whether a hero or possessing the ego of superiority, one is proclaimed in the world as pure or sullied only by his character. If, as an evil one, I pretend to be good, appear holy completely fallen in merit, totally unworthy dissimulate as worthy and lacking in character appear as of character, practice *adharma* in the guise of *dharma* and obtain the fruit of turning the world turbid by abstaining from all acts of good and auspiciousness and acting against the moral codes, who in this world, that can reflect and distinguish good from bad, would regard me, when, by loss of character, I defy the good of the world? Whom could I follow and by what action could I reach heaven obtained only by the meitorious? If I continue to live in a state of violation of my vow and acting in untruth, quite unbridled, the whole world would follow me in that, as in whatever manner a ruler acts, his subjects also would act. Truth and compassion are the noblest age-old kingly qualities. Hence the empire itself should be rooted in truth. The world is established in truth. The great ṛishis and the celestials have always regarded only truth as the highest. In this world it is the one who utters truth that reaches the zenith. People dread the untruthful one as the sight of a serpent. The highest *dharma* in this world is truth, and it is the root

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of everything great and good. Truth is almighty in this world. In truth is the highest prosperity established. Everything has its root only in truth. There is no higher place in the universe than that of truth. Whatever is given away, sacrifice and worship, penance performed, *Veda* studied, are all rooted in truth. Hence one should ever be wedded to truth. The one who protects *satya* rules the world; the same protects the honour of the family, and finally is lauded in heaven. One who acts the opposite sinks into hell. Therefore, why would not I follow my father's dictate, keep my word and promise and maintain veracity by acting truthfully? Neither through greed nor illusion, nor ignorance or blinding darkness would I break the bridge of truth of my father by which alone could he cross over to the other world of beatitude. I shall remain truthful in maintaining my word of honour. Neither the gods nor the manes would approve the untruthful, the fickle and the quivering in *dharma*. So we have heard. Having come to this mortal world of action, one should do only deeds of merit:

भवान्मे प्रियकामार्थं वचनं यदिहोक्तवान् ।
अकार्यं कार्यसंकाशमपथ्यं पथ्यसम्मितम् ।
निर्मर्यादं तु पुरुषः पापाचारसमन्वितः ।
मानं न लभते सत्सु भिन्नचारित्रदर्शनः ॥
कुलीनमकुलीनं वा वीरं पुरुषमानिनम् ।
चारित्रमेव व्याख्याति शुचिं वा यदि वाशुचिम् ॥
लक्षण्यवदलक्षण्यो दुःशीलः शीलवानिव ॥
अधर्मं धर्मवेषेण यदिमं लोकसङ्करम् ।
आधिपत्ये शुभां हित्वा क्रियां विधिविवर्जिताम् ॥
कश्चेतयानः पुरुषः कार्याकार्यविचक्षणः ।
बहु मंस्यति मां लोके दुर्वृत्तं लोकदूषणम् ॥
कस्य यास्याम्यहं वृत्तं केन वा स्वर्गमाप्नुयाम् ।
अनये वर्तमानोऽहं वृत्त्या हीनप्रतिज्ञया ॥
कामवृत्तस्त्वयं लोकः कृत्स्नः समुपवर्तते ।
यद्वृत्ताः सन्ति राजानस्तद्वृत्ताः सन्ति हि प्रजाः ॥
सत्यमेवानृशंसं च राजवृत्तं सनातनम् ।
तस्मात् सत्यात्मकं राज्यं सत्ये लोकः प्रतिष्ठतः ॥
ऋषयश्चैव देवाश्च सत्यमेव हि मेनिरे ।
सत्यवादी हि लोकेस्मिन् परमं गच्छति क्षयम् ॥
उद्विजन्ते यथा सर्पान्निरादनृतवादिनः ।
धर्मः सत्यं परो लोके मूलं सर्वस्य चोच्यते ॥

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सत्यमेवेश्वरो लोके सत्ये पद्मा प्रतिष्ठिता ।
सत्यमूलानि सर्वाणि सत्यान्नास्ति परं पदम् ।।
दत्तमिष्टं हुतं चैव तप्तानि च तपांसि च ।
वेदाः सत्यप्रतिष्ठानास्तस्मात्सत्यपरो भवेत् ।।
एकः पालयते लोकमेकः पालयते कुलम् ।
मज्जत्येको हि निरय एकः स्वर्गे महीयते ।।
सोऽहं पितुर्नियोगं तु किमर्थं नानुपालये ।
सत्यप्रतिश्रवः सत्यं सत्येन समयीकृतः ।।
नैव लोभान्न मोहाद्वा न ह्यज्ञानात्तमोऽन्वितः ।
सेतुं सत्यस्य भेत्स्यामि गुरोः सत्यप्रतिश्रवः ।।
असत्यसन्धस्य सतश्चलस्यास्थिरचेतसः ।
नैव देवा न पितरः प्रतीच्छन्तीति नः श्रुतम् ।।
कर्मभूमिमिमां प्राप्य कर्तव्यं कर्म यच्छुभम् ।

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 109, 2-18, 28

The citizens themselves are so pleased with Rāma for his reply to Bharata and sage Jābāli's exhortation, inducing him to return with them, that they applaud his *dhārmik* reply, and with one voice acclaim, 'We all know Kākutstha (Rāma) so well. Rāghava has indeed spoken very well. This noble one stands steadfast in fulfilling the word of his father and hence we are unable to move him from his resolve:

काकुत्स्थमभिजानीमः सम्यग्वदति राघवः ।
एषोऽपि च महाभागः पितुर्वचसि तिष्ठति ।।
अत एव न शक्ताः स्मो व्यावर्तयितुमञ्जसा ।

Rāmāyaṇa, 2, 111, 20-21

All the ṛishis, the siddhas and the invisible celestials praise the *dharma* of both Rāma and Bharata (Fig 44 and Fig 45), as they listen with horripulation the conversation of the brothers, and wonder not only at their coming together but at their attitude towards *dharma*. They praise them as noble ones that brought honour to the family of Kakutstha and exclaim 'Fortunate indeed is he whose sons these two are, who not only know *dharma* but who have established the victory of *dharma*. Having listened to them, we love them both all the more:

तमप्रतिमतेजोभ्यां भ्रातृभ्यां रोमहर्षणम् ।
विस्मिताः संगमं प्रेक्ष्य समवेता महर्षयः ।।
अन्तर्हितास्त्वृषिगणाः सिद्धाश्च परमर्षयः ।
तौ भ्रातरौ महात्मानौ काकुत्स्थौ प्रशशंसिरे ।।

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स धन्यो यस्य पुत्रौ द्वौ धर्मज्ञौ धर्मविक्रमौ ।
श्रुत्वा वयं हि संभाषांमुभाभ्यां स्पृहयामहे ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 112, 1-3

Rāma's final word to Bharata is 'The colour and glory of the moon could recede from him or the snow-covered Himālaya shed the snow, the ocean itself trespass its shore-line, but I shall not break my word which I had given to my father:

लक्ष्मीश्चन्द्रादपेयाद्वा हिमवान् वा हिमं त्यजेत् ।
अतियात्सागरो वेलां न प्रतिज्ञामहं पितुः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 112, 18

He however satisfies Bharata by giving him his *pādukas* (Fig. 46 and 47).

Rāma's words of wisdom are remarkable, when he corrects Lakshmaṇa, beyond himself in rage and upbraiding even his father in the presence of Kausalyā and even suggesting the correction of the lapses of elders as he puts it, calling for Rāma's thoughtful handling of the situation by drawing attention to his mistaken notion of *dharma*, when he could be so illogical as to criticise his own father who had no selfish end to gain except his complete surrender to truth. In this situation, and in the case of Bharata where, strangely enough, Bharata has his own seemingly logical argument to call back Rāma to rule the empire, pointing out that thereby he would be rendering a service by wiping a blot on Daśaratha's name as one who blindly acted infatuated by his emotion to Kaikeyī, as also Rāma's reaction and suitable reply to the misguiding philosophy of the sage Jābāli, whose only purpose in his strange talk was to induce Rāma's return, Kshemendra's handling of all these situations is indeed most interesting and requires to be compared with Vālmīki's version to which it acts as a very suggestive complement. Rāma reminds an angry Lakshmaṇa of what really *dharma* is and therein points out his folly. 'Render your mind clear and pure, ward off anger by patience, the normal behaviour of a great one is to act appropriately. Truth renders beautiful those wedded to it and to volour, just as noble birth beautifies eminent position of purity and power. Reverence to elders, courage in sorrow, patience in anger and compassion in helplessness, these are

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the immaculate flowers of fame that are the garlands of the treasure of sovereignty. Where are the good ones and where wickedness, where are great qualities and where crookedness, where is discrimination and where mad ferocity, these opposites are far apart. Friendliness, lack of jealousy, patience, courage, fixedness of purpose, constancy, these are the treasureheaps of good qualities in the wise ones. Understand that fate alone is responsible for this my banishment. In this there is no human endeavour. Why should you exhibit this agitation in anger. Know that whatever goes wrong even with the best of efforts, and whatever ends fruitfully without the slightest endeavour for it, is all by the wonderful power of *karma* and it is the manifestation only of fate:

क्रियतां विमलं चेतः कोपः शान्त्या च धार्यताम् ।
औचित्यचारु चरितं सहजं हि महात्मनाम् ।।
तितिक्षा शोभते शान्त्या वीर्यविक्रमशालिनाम् ।
प्रभविष्णुपदानां च महतामिव सन्ततिः ।।
भक्तिर्गुरौ धृतिर्दुःखे क्षमा कोपे दया कृशे ।
एताः स्त यशसः शुभ्राः साम्राज्यविभवस्रजः ।।
क्व सन्तः क्व च दौर्जन्यं क्व गुणाः क्व च वक्रता ।
क्व विवेकः क्व पारुष्यं दूरमेतत्परस्परम् ।।
इत्येष विदुषामग्रे गुणमानसमुच्चयः ।
दैवमेव विजानीहि प्रवासे मम कारणम् ।
न हि पौरुषमत्रास्ति किं वृथा कोपसंभ्रमैः ।
कुर्वतां यद्विपर्यन्ते फलन्ति यदकुर्वताम् ।।
कर्मण्यद्भुतशक्तेस्तद्दैवस्यैव विजृम्भितम् ।

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 2, 849-865

Rāma's reply to Bharata's request to return and his argument for that is indeed another noteworthy epistle. 'All that integrate should necessarily disintegrate, mounting high should end in a fall, company necessarily means final separation. Life surely ends in death. Wealth, prosperity, love and friendly coming together and years of life, all these fall caught in the moving wheel of mortals. It is the nature of the existing ones to go out of existence, and it is the very nature of life that it would certainly end. There is no solution of overcoming the power of destuction, and time that moves down cannot be overcome and put back as the flame which goes up cannot be turned down. Thus observing your mind and other desires and

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knowing everything as disintegrating, the good and wise ones remain dispassionate. The limit of all existence is decay and disappearance. The limit of life is death. But lack of discrimination has no limit as it is only through that is born illusion. It is only by the right path indicated by *dharma* that the one who performs deeds of merit reaches heaven. Our father whose merit and fame is unending in its abundance has not in the least to be worried about. I should never abandon the fulfilment of the command of our father, established always in truth. Who is it that can call himself wealthy by the treasure of truth and yet abandon truth? O Bharata! as a son please protect the truth of our father whose treasure of fame was his adherence to truth. Truth far transcends in its glory everything, the holiest spots, the highest penance, the most staggering sacrifice and the most meticulous *yajña* ritual.

संचयानां क्षयोऽवश्यं निपातोऽवश्यमुन्नतेः ।
सङ्गानां विरहोऽवश्यमवश्यं मृत्युरायुषः ॥
धनं विभूतयो योगाः प्रीतयः प्रियसङ्गमाः ।
आयूंषि च पतन्त्येव क्षयचक्रे शरीरिणाम् ॥
स्वभाव एष भावनां यदभावातिपातिनः ।
आयुषश्च स्वभावोऽयं सर्वथा यद्विपद्यते ॥
न मे कश्चिदुपायोस्ति शक्तिः संक्षयदीक्षिता ।
अधो विधीयते येन कालस्याग्नेरिवोद्‌गतिः ॥
तस्यास्य तव चाशक्तं ममान्येषामथात्मनः ।
क्षयं सर्वात्मना ज्ञात्वा सन्तः स्वस्थवदास्थिताः ॥
अभावावधयो भावा निधनावधि जीवितम् ।
अविवेकस्त्वनवधिर्येनायं जायते भ्रमः ॥
धर्मोऽपदिष्टेन पथा यातः स सुकृती दिवम् ।
न नः शोच्यः पिता यस्य यशः पुण्यमिवाक्षयः ॥
मया तु शासनं तस्य न त्याज्यं सत्यवर्तिना ।
को हि सत्यधनी नाम सत्यमेव समुत्सृजेत् ॥

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 2, 237-244

सत्यं रक्ष पितुः पुत्र सत्यं सत्ययशोनिधेः ।
सत्यं तीर्थतपोदानयज्ञेभ्योऽपि विशिष्यते ॥

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī, 2, 257

Again, though Rāma is opposed to the strange philosophy couched in the words of Jābāli, he controls himself and very respectfully

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answers the great sage. "O reverend Sir" out of your overflowing affection towards us, and your eye of love, you have spoken what may appear logical and befitting. Still what is the use of a mortal who is fouled by straying from truth like a lamp without the flame, like the body bereft of life. What is the use of wealth and prosperity for one who is dovoid of and slipped from truth and fallen in character. Like the moonlight for the blind, like a garland for a corpse, if a king through covetousness crosses the limit of *dharma*, undoubtedly all his subjects are lost in a deluge as it were which uproots all of them. Like detachment in the wise and old, like propriety in the case of the great, like immaculate character in noble ones, truth is the ornament of rulers. O reverend one, I would never give up truth on any account of greed. Even fortune obtained by one devoid of truth perishes. All enjoyment is transitory like ripples and waves, and all wealth is soiled by greed. For all mortals truth is the highest immaculate glory that lasts aeons. Having their natural seat at a depth, water and wealth cannot stay on the surface at an elevation and dry out, unspent. The good, that are pleasant because of their contentment and move in the path of truth, have only their discrimination as their treasure that upholds them and not the wealth that is maintained by *adharma*. The kingdom free from sin is alone charming for those whose utterance is ever truth. Where is that treasure and wealth to be used which is contaminated by the mire of untruth?

भगवानतिवात्सल्यादस्माकं स्निग्धचक्षुषा ।
उपपत्त्येव घटितं केवलं भवतोऽदितम् ॥
सत्याच्च्युतेनाशुचिना किं मनुष्येण कारणम् ।
पात्रेनेवास्तदीपेन कायेनेव गतासुना ॥
पुंसः सत्यविहीनस्य सत्यभ्रष्टेन किं श्रिया ।
अन्धस्य चन्द्रकान्त्येव मालयेव गतायुषः ॥
राजा चेद्धर्ममर्यादां लोभादुत्क्रम्य वर्तते ।
उन्मूलोपप्लवेनैताः सर्वथा निहताः प्रजाः ॥
वैंराज्ञमिव वृद्धानामौचित्यं महतामिव ।
शुचिशीलमिवार्याणां सत्यं राज्ञां विभूषणम् ॥
न लोभात्सत्यमुत्स्रष्टुं भगवन्नहमुत्सहे ।
प्राप्ता अपि विनश्यन्ति सत्यहीनस्य सम्पदः ॥
तरंगभंगुरा भोगाः कार्पण्यमलिनं धनम् ।
कल्पान्तस्थायि धवलं यशः सत्यं च देहिनाम् ॥

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कृतास्पदानि निम्नेषु न तिष्ठन्त्युन्नते क्वचित् ।
अव्ययप्रलयान्येव सलिलानि धनानि च ।।
सन्तः सन्तोषविशदा व्रजन्तः सत्यवर्त्मना ।
धनैरधर्मसन्धार्यैर्विधार्यन्ते न धीधनाः ।।
राज्यं विरजसामेव शोभते सत्यवादिनाम् ।
असत्यपङ्कमलिना विभूतिः क्वोपयुज्यते ।।

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 2, 273-282

Rāma is ever on the right path, never eager to attain his end by any except the fairest means. With all his overwhelming grief by his separation from Sītā and with all his eagerness to search for her and find her, Rāma is so just and objective in his outlook that he himself suggests to Sugrīva that, from the month of Śrāvaṇa, when Sugrīva himself was beginning his life getting crowned a king, started four months of the rainy season when no endeavour was possible; and therefore he rules out all possibility of search for Sītā by the monkeys set in different directions. He suggests that as he had promised his father to be away in the forest, he would not even for a moment enter a city, much less stay in it. He politely refuses the respectful invitation of Hanumān to come and stay in Sugrīva's palace. He would fain stay in the cave of the mountain Riśyamūka and await the month of Kārtikā, when alone there could be action initated again. This is a suggestion emanating from Rāma himself. Rāma is so mindful of the conveniencc of others and also of propriety that he would rather suffer the pangs of separation than hasten unjustified impossible action:

चतुर्दश समाः सौम्य ग्रामं वा यदि वा पुरम् ।
न प्रवेक्ष्यामि हनुमन् पितुर्निर्देशपालकः ।।
पूर्वोऽयं वार्षिको मासः श्रवणः सलिलागमः ।
प्रवृत्ताः सौम्य चत्वारो मासा वार्षिकसंज्ञिकाः ।।
नायमुद्योगसमयः प्रविश त्वं मही शुभाम् ।
अस्मिन्वत्स्याम्यहं सौम्य पर्वते सह लक्ष्मणः ।।
इयं गिरिगुहा रम्या विशाला युक्तमारुतः ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 4, 26, 9, 13-15

With the advent of autumn, the whole atmosphere was so pleasant, the woods and dales all around were so green and colourful with flowers, and life itself was so gay, inspiring joy, with the birds

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and animals on the move, that it made Rāma's miserable existence all the more unbearable. In the excess of his grief, he almost gets upset with Sugrīva for his being so lost in pleasures as to forget his duty to keep his word and search out Sītā. The only one who could understand was Hanumān, and he had even advised Sugrīva that it was time that he acted to help Rāma. Hanumān rightly remarks that though Rāma, as an outstanding hero, could by his arrows control even the celestials, the asuras the greatest nāgas, he would, still not act rashly and would wait patiently expecting Sugrīva to fulfil his vow:

कामं खलु शरैः शक्तः सुरासुरमहोरगान् ।
वशे दाशरथिः कर्तुं त्वत्प्रतिज्ञां तु कांक्षते ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 4, 29, 22-23

Rāma feels so much about Sugrīva's inaction that he expresses how detestable is ingratitude. That meanest of mortals in this world, who by a promise raises a hope in one who requests and seeks help, especially when obliged to him for a good turn done, and does not keep the word, is indeed detestable. Whether auspicious or sinful, a word given, truthfully fulfilled, is indeed worthy of a hero, and he is to be really acclaimed a noble one. Those friends, who, having their own objects gained, do not in turn fulfil the objects of others are ungrateful, and even the cannibals would not eat their corpses:

अर्थिनामुपपन्नानां पूर्वं चाप्युपकारिणाम् ।
आशां संश्रुत्य यो हन्ति स लोके पुरुषाधमः ॥
शुभं वा यदि वा पापं यो हि वाक्यमुदीरितम् ।
सत्येन परिगृह्णति स वीरः पुरुषोत्तमः ।
कृतार्था ह्यकृतार्थानां मित्राणां न भवन्ति ये ।
तान् मृतानपि क्रव्यादाः कृतघ्नान्नोपभुञ्जते ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 4, 30, 70-72

The poet Sundareśvara describes Rāma as contrasting the noble and the ignoble by describing how unasked the laden cloud unburdens itself filling the rivers, tanks, lakes and wells with water and silently disappears having enriched the earth by its bounty, leaving the world wondering at the magnanimous action of the noble one, while having received bounteous help and with mind lost in trivial pleasures the

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king of the monkeys does not so much as even remember the promise he made nor even him that sought his help and realise his action as unworthy of gentility:

नदीस्तटाकानि सरांसि वापिका जलेन सम्पूर्य विधाय वारिधिः ।
महीमहीनर्द्धिमभूत्तिरोहितो विचित्रमेदद्धि विचेष्टितं सताम् ॥
कृतोपकारस्तु वनालयाधिपश्चिराय स ग्राम्यसुखेषु सक्तधीः ।
कृतां प्रतिज्ञां शरणार्थिनं च मां न हि स्मरत्येतदनार्यचेष्टितम् ॥

Sundararāmāyaṇa 10, 42-43

Rāma in his great grief, feels that he is slighted, and he becomes almost enraged with Sugrīva for his complete inertia and almost total forgetfulness. He feels so slighted for the reason, as he imagines, that he is helpless, shorn of a kingdom, insulted by Rāvaṇa, downcast, exiled, lovelorn, and more than all seeking his help as his refuge. These Rāma considers the reasons for Sugrīva as king of the monkeys insulting him. 'Hence', says Rāma 'knowing that this is the time to search for Sītā and, with his object fulfilled, he forgets his own promise to help, and wickedly enough does not even remember it. You should therefore go to Kishkindhā and tell that chief of monkeys, who is acting foolishly indulging in trivial pleasures, that the way that Vālī went is not altogether closed. Remember your word and stand by it and do not go the way of Vālī.' This so enrages Lakshmaṇa that, snatching his bow, he starts with the determination to end Surgrīva so ungrateful and untruthful. But Rāma suddenly checks his own grief and anger, realises that his expression had roused Lakshmaṇa to action which, however, the noble-minded Rāma could never allow to be accomplished and, Rāma, himself a hero who could overcome the most invincible enemy, talks to him softly and with a clear mind. 'One like you Lakshmaṇa, should not commit a sin like this; the one who by his nobility controls and annihilates anger is indeed the highest among men. You, always accustomed to do the right thing, should not do this. You should nurse the same affection and love with which we originally met him. Avoid harsh utterance and couch your language in sweet words. We should only remind Sugrīva that the time of action is fast being lost by delay:

अनाथो हृतराज्योऽयं रावणेन च धर्षितः ।
दीनो दूरगृहः कामी मां चैव शरणं गतः ।

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इत्येतैः कारणैः सोम्य सुग्रीवस्य दुरात्मनः ।
अहं वानरराजस्य परिभूतः परन्तप ॥
स कालं परिसंख्याय सीतायाः परिमार्गणे ।
कृतार्थः समयं कृत्वा दुर्मतिर्न विबुध्यते ॥
स किष्किन्धां प्रविश्य त्वं ब्रूहि वानरपुङ्गवम् ।
मूर्खं ग्राम्यसुखे सक्तं सुग्रीवं वचनान्मम ॥
...न च संकुचितः पन्था येन षाली हतो गतः ।
समये तिष्ठ सुग्रीव मा वालिपथमन्वगाः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa, 4, 30. 67-70, 81

तमात्तबाणासनमापतन्तं निवेदितार्थं रणचण्डकोपम् ।
उवाच रामः परवीरहन्ता स्ववेक्षितं सानुनयं च वाक्यम् ॥
न हि वै त्वद्विधो लोके पापमेवं समाचरेत् ।
कोपमार्येन यो हन्ति स वीरः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥
नेदमद्य तथा ग्राह्यं साधुवृत्तेन लक्ष्मण ।
तां प्रीतिमनुवर्तस्व पूर्ववृत्रं च सङ्गतम् ॥
सामोपहितया वाचा रूक्षाणि परिवर्जयन् ।
वक्तुमर्हसि सुग्रीवं व्यतीतं कालपर्यये ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 4, 31, 5-8

Kshemendra even more effectively has put the true feelings of Rāma, the conflict between grief, anger and righteousness eliminated, and Rāma's innermost righteous mind standing out in all its lustre. In his advice to Sugrīva, Hanumān mentions that Rāma would never remind him. 'Rāma is the very ocean of propriety and nobility. He would not himself call for action. On the other hand, even though tormented from separation from his beloved one ever so long, he would even willingly submit himself to death, but would not make a request. The highest and the noblest would instantly act to perform even impossible deeds to help others. But in an action pertaining to themselves they would refrain from making a request and would be silent on it:

प्राणपीडामपि चिरं सहेत विरहार्दितः ।
स्वयं न प्रेरयत्वेव सत्वमौचित्यसागरः ॥
दुष्करेष्वपि कार्येषु परेषां सततोदिताः ।
स्वकार्याभ्यर्थनादैन्यमौनिनो मानिनः परम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 3, 35-36

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Here again Kshemendra describes Rāma's appease of Lakshmaṇa roused to anger and starting threatenigly to end Sugrīva. 'Oh Saumitri! do not be angry with him. Leave him alone to be himself the one to blame. The good are graceful and honey-sweet in their mind towards even those who err. It is because of affection that a friend is so styled, even if it were for only once that their minds have met. Even when a friend's faults are discovered by the passage of time, he should not be disfavoured. Good men completely fraternise and make to completely win over even the wicked by their own good behaviour, even those that act unworthily, by their own truthful action. Even the enemy is won over by doing a good turn. Those, that punish trivial faults by a death sentence, and express their pleasure by no special effort to reward, would be abandoned by people who come to know them to be clever in finding faults and would not come to their aid when they are in trouble, like the servants of the greedy that are established in their own illusory glory of ego and importance:

सौमित्रो मा क्रुधस्तस्मै स एवास्त्वपवादभाक् ।
सन्तः कृतापराधेपि प्रसादमधुराशयाः ॥
प्रणयात्सुहृदित्युक्तः सकृदप्युचिताशयैः ।
कालेन दृष्टदोषोऽपि नार्हत्येव विमाननाम् ॥
अनार्यमार्यवृत्तेन सत्येनावृत्तकारिणम् ।
रिपुमप्युपकारेण वशीकुर्वन्ति साधवः ॥
अल्पेपि दोषे प्राणेषु दण्डो यैर्विनिपात्यते ।
प्रकृतिस्थाः प्रसादे ये कृच्छ्रा तैः सह सङ्गतिः ॥
दोषग्रहणदक्षाणां विरज्यन्ते सुहृज्जनाः ।
मिथ्याभिमानस्तब्धानां लुब्धानामिव सेवकाः ॥

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 3, 77-81

One of the great incidents in Rāma's wanderings in the forest is his encounter with Vālī, where his killing of Vālī is questioned by Vāli himself on his deathbed. When Vālī goes to meet Sugrīva for the first time, there is no intervention by Tārā, but when there is a second call from Sugrīva and Vālī rushes again, his dear wife Tārā is upset and tries to stop him. She tells him that, so completely routed, Sugrīva would not have called again without securing adequate help; and, having come to know through spies, she warns him that Sugrīva, having obtained the protection of the two unassailable

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heroes of the Ikshvāku family, there was no chance for him to escape if he chose the warpath. Rāma is the vanquisher of all enemy forces like the fire of deluge arising for it. He was the sheltering tree of all the good and the refuge of everyone in peril, the only protection of all the afflicted and the one receptacle of renown, abundantly equipped in the highest knowledge and deliberation and steadfast in fulfilling the direction of his father. He is a mine of good qualities like a mountain receptacle of all metal ores. Hence, enmity on your part with so great a one as Rāma, invincible and immeasurable in his valour on the battlefield, is unwise. Though you are a hero, yet I shall tell you something which you should not belittle. Listen and act, and what I tell you is for your good. Hasten to crown your brother as the heir apparent. Hero though you be, you should not quarrel with your younger brother. I feel that the most proper thing for you is to seek friendship with Rāma and Sugrīva, abandoning all enmity. This younger brother of yours is to be treated with love and affection. Wherever, here or there, he is ever your closest relative. There can be no one so close as a relative as he on earth. Freely give unto him, honour him and, by your worthy treatment, bring him so close to you that there could be none between you both. Give up this enmity and let him be close to you. I do not see any other way out for you except your making up with your brother by affection and kindness. If you would do something agreeable to me knowing me to be your best wellwisher, I earnestly entreat you to act very well thiswise:

रामः परबलामर्दी युगान्तग्निरिवोत्थितः ।
निवासवृक्षः साधूनामापन्नानां परा गतिः ।।
अर्थानां संश्रयश्चैव यशसश्चैकभाजनम् ।
ज्ञानविज्ञानसम्पन्नो निदेशे निरतः पितुः ।।
धातूनामिव शैलेन्द्रो गुणानामाकरो महान् ।
तत् क्षमो न विरोधस्ते समं तेन महात्मना ।।
दुर्जयेनाप्रमेयेन रामेण रणकर्मसु ।
शूर वक्ष्यामि ते किं चिन्नचेच्छाम्यभ्यसूयितुम् ।।
श्रूयतां क्रियतां चैव तव वक्ष्याति यद्धितम् ।
यौवराज्येन सुग्रीवं तूर्णं साध्वभिषेचय ।।
विग्रहं मा कृथा वीर भ्रात्रा राजन् यवीयसा ।
अहं हि ते क्षमं मन्ये तेन रामेण सौहृदम् ।।

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सुग्रीवेण च सम्प्रीतिं वैरमुत्सृज्य दूरतः ।
लालनीयो हि ते भ्राता यवीयानेष वानरः ॥
तत्र वा सन्निहस्थो वा सर्वथा बन्धुरेव ते ।
न हि तेन समं बन्धुं भुवि पश्यामि कंचन ॥
दानमानादिसत्कारैः कुरुष्व प्रत्यनन्तरम् ।
वैरमेतत्समुत्सृज्य तव पार्श्वे स तिष्ठतु ॥
सुग्रीवो विपुलग्रीवस्तव बन्धुः सदा मतः ।
भ्रातुःसौहृदमालब्य नान्या गतिरिहस्ति ते ।
यदि ते मत्प्रियं कार्यं यदि चावैषि मां हिताम् ।
याच्यमानः प्रयत्नेन साधु वाक्यं कुरुष्व मे ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 4, 15, 19-29

Vālī is so enraged with Sugrīva for challenging him, that he makes this clear to Tārā, refusing to make amends with his brother (Fig 48). But he asks her not to worry on his account as he expected no peril from Rāma, so convinced is he that Rāma knows and acts according to *dharma* and he would never do anything sinful:

न च कार्यो विषादस्ते राघवं प्रति मत्कृते ।
धर्मज्ञश्च कृतज्ञश्च कथं पापं करिष्यति ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 4, 16, 5

But when Vālī falls by the arrow of Rāma that hits him in his chest and mortally wounds him (Fig. 49), he rails at Rāma and tells him in unequivocal terms condemning his attitude but marshalling arguments in what he considers a just exposition of his own deserving case. "You are a royal prince, famous for your loving eye towards everyone, born of noble parentage, great in strength, valour and character. What indeed is it that you have achieved by killing me from a hiding place, specially, when I was engaged in battle with another, hitting me in my chest by an arrow? Your fame is sung all over the earth by all living beings as the most compassionate and as wedded to accomplishing the good of others, full of kindness and great in enthusiasm, befitting in action and steady in deeds of merit. The greatest qualities of kings are self control, peace, patience; saintly conduct, forbearance, truth, valour and capacity to punish culprits. Having these great qualities in mind and your high and noble birth, I came out to meet in battle Sugrīva, though dissuaged by Tārā, as I believed that you would not fight me when I was engag-

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ing another, and specially when I was unaware of your presence. When I could not see you, I thought that my reckoning was correct. I did not know you as with soul killed, a wicked one with misleading banner of merit, a sinner camouflaged like a well hidden by grass growth, a sinner in the garb of a saint, like fire covered with ashes. I did not know that you were just shrouded in a veil of *dharma*. Neither in your kingdom nor in your city anywhere had I done any wrong unto you nor insulted you. Why have you killed me, innocent as I am without a blemish, a wild monkey moving in the forest, living on fruits and roots?

त्वं नराधिपतेः पुत्रः प्रथितः प्रियदर्शनः ।
कुलीनः सत्वसम्पन्नस्तेजस्वी चरितव्रतः ।।
परांङ्मुखवधं कृत्वा को नु प्राप्तस्त्वया गुणः ।
यदहं युद्धसंरब्धः शरेणोरसि सादितः ।।
रामः करुणवेदी च प्रजानां च हिते रतः ।
सानुक्रोशो महोत्साहः समयज्ञो दृढव्रतः ।।
इति ते सर्वभूतानि कथयन्ति यशो भुवि ।
दमः शमः क्षमा धर्मो धृतिः सत्यं पराक्रमः ।।
पार्थिवानां गुणा राजन् दण्डश्चाप्यपराधिषु ।
तान् गुणान् सम्प्रधार्याहंमग्र्यं चाभिजनं तव ।।
तारया प्रतिषिद्धोऽपि सुग्रीवेण समागतः ।
न मामन्येन संरब्धं प्रमत्तं योद्धुमर्हति ।।
इति में बुद्धिरुत्पन्ना बभूवादर्शने तव ।
न त्वां विनिहतात्मानं धर्मध्वजमधार्मिकम् ।।
जाने पापसमाचारं तृणैः कूपमिवावृतम् ।
सतां वेषधरं पापं प्रच्छन्नमिव पावकम् ।।
नाहं त्वामभिजानामि धर्मच्छद्माभिसंवृतम् ।
विषये वा पुरे वा ते यदा नापकरोम्यहम् ।।
न च त्वामवजानेऽहं कस्मान्मां हंस्यकिल्बिषम् ।
फलमूलाशिनं नित्यं वानरं वनगोचरम् ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 4, 17, 14-23

Rāma so questioned by Vālī replies him appropriately and coolly. Without knowing *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and proper worldly behaviour, how is it you rail at me in childish fashion? The entire expanse of territory here with its hills and dales, mountains and forests, with all its denizens, animals, birds and humans, are under the rule of Bharata the king, wedded to *dharma* and

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satya, knowing the true nature of *dharma*, *kāma* and *artha*, efficient in rewarding and punishing good and bad deeds. At his behest and on his behalf, we and other rulers like me move along from one place to another only to enhance the glory of *dharma*. When such a one as Bharata, to whom nothing is dearer than *dharma* rules the earth, how could one dare do any wrong? Given to passion, you have not followed the proper path of justice. Being an elder brother in the position of a father, on a level with the physical progenitor and the teacher of the highest knowledge, you should have treated your younger brother as your son or disciple if you had followed *dharma*. *Dharma* indeed is very subtle and not easily understood. It is in the form of the conscience of everyone which knows what is right and wrong. Fickle by nature, you have acted on the counsel of monkeys devoid of continence, and like one born blind led by similar ones are unable to see. I should put it even clearer to you as you should not just blame me clouded by your anger. You may see for yourself why you are killed. You have abandoned our ancient honoured way of life and committed the heinous sin of living with your younger brother's wife. I see no other way of admonishing you except by punishment for your deviation from the path of merit and the true way of the world. Being a born Kshatriya ruler I cannot tolerate any passionate outrage on a sister or the wife of a younger brother. My friendship with Sugrīva is as with a brother to restore him his wife and kingdom. I have given him my word with fire as my witness and cannot but fulfil it. There is also yet another important reason which if you understand logically you can no more rail at me. The greatest rājaṛishis learned in *dharma* go ahunting. To catch or kill animals and birds, they use various contrivances like nets, ropes, pitfalls, clad themselves in camouflaged dress, and invisible or visible hunt animals running, frightened or carefree, aware or unaware, whether for their flesh or without any such need. Whether you were fighting among yourselves or not, in whatever attitude, as an animal, a monkey, you could be my target:

धर्ममर्थं च कामं च समयं चापि लौकिकम् ।
अविज्ञाय कथं बाल्यान्मामिहाद्य विगर्हसे...
ईक्ष्वाकूणामियं भूमिः सशैलवनकानना ।
मृगपक्षिमनुष्याणां निग्रहप्रग्रहावपि ॥
तां पालयति धर्मात्मा भरतः सत्यवान् ऋजुः ।

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धर्मकामार्थतत्वज्ञो निग्रहानुग्रहे रतः ।।
नयश्च विनयश्चोभौ यस्मिन् सत्यं च सुस्थितम् ।
विक्रमश्च यथा दृष्टः स राजा देशकालवित् ।।
तस्य धर्मकृतादेशा वयमन्ये च पार्थिवाः ।
चरामो वसुधां कृत्स्नां धर्मसन्तानमिच्छतः ।।
तस्मिन्नृपतिशार्दूले भरते धर्मवत्सके ।
पालयत्यखिलां भूमिं कश्चरेद्धर्मनिग्रहम् ।।
ते वयं धर्मविभ्रष्टं स्वधर्मे परमे स्थिताः ।
भरताज्ञां पुरस्कृत्य निगृह्णीमो यथाविधि ।।
त्वं तु संक्लिष्टधर्मा च कर्मणा च विगर्हितः ।
कामतन्त्रप्रधानश्च न स्थितो राजवर्त्मनि ।।
ज्येष्ठो भ्राता पिता चैव यश्च विद्यां प्रयच्छति ।
त्रयस्ते पितरो ज्ञेया धर्म्ये वर्त्मनि वर्तिनः ।।
यवीयानात्मनः पुत्रः शिष्यश्चापि गुणोदितः ।
पुत्रवत्ते त्रयश्चिन्त्या धर्मश्चेदत्र कारणम् ।।
सूक्ष्मः परमदुर्ज्ञेयः सतां धर्मः प्लवंगम ।
हृदिस्थः सर्वभूतानामात्मा वेद शुभाशुभम् ।।
चपलश्चपलैः सार्धं वानरैरकृतात्मभिः ।
जात्यन्ध इव जात्यन्धैर्मन्त्रयन् द्रक्ष्यसे नु किम् ।।
अहं तु व्यक्ततामस्य वचनस्य ब्रवीमि ते ।
न हि मां केवलं रोषात्त्वं विगर्हितुमर्हसि ।
तदेतत्कारणं पश्य यदर्थं त्वं मया हतः ।।
भ्रातुर्वर्तसि भार्यायां त्यक्त्वा धर्मं सनातनम् ।।
अस्य त्वं धरमाणस्य सुग्रीवस्य महात्मनः ।
रुमायां वर्तसे कामात् स्नुषायां पापकर्मकृत् ।।
तद्व्यतीतस्य ते धर्मात्कामवृत्तस्य वानर ।
भ्रातृभार्याविमर्शेऽस्मिन् दण्डोऽयं प्रतिपादितः ।।
न हि धर्मविरुद्धस्य लोकवृत्तादपेयुषः ।
दण्डादन्यत्र पश्यामि निग्रहं हरियूथप ।।
न हि ते मर्षये पापं क्षत्रियोऽहं कुलोद्भवः ।
औरसीं भगिनीं वापि भार्यां वाप्नुजस्य यः ।......
प्रचरेत नरः कामात्तस्य दण्डो वधः स्मृतः ।।
सुग्रीवेण च मे सख्यं लक्ष्मणेन यथा तथा ।।
दारराज्यनिमित्तं च निःश्रेयसरतः स मे ।।
प्रतिज्ञा च मया दत्ता तदा पावकसन्निधौ ।
प्रतिज्ञाय कथं शक्यं मद्विधेनानवेक्षितुम् ।।
तदेभिः कारणैः सर्वैर्महद्भिर्धर्मसंहितैः ।
शासनं तव यद्युक्तं तद्भवाननुमन्यताम् ।।
सर्वथा धर्म इत्येव द्रष्टव्यस्तव निग्रहः ।...

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श्रुणु चाप्यपरं भूयः कारणं हरिपुंगव ।
यच्छ्रुत्वा हेतुमद्वीर न मन्युं कर्तुमर्हसि ॥
न मे तत्र मनस्तापो न मन्युर्हरियूथप ।
वागुराभिश्च पाशैश्च कूटैश्च विविधैर्नराः ॥
प्रतिच्छन्नाश्च दृश्याश्च गृह्णन्ति सुबहून्मृगान् ।
प्रधावितान्वा वित्रस्तान् विस्रब्धांश्चापि निष्ठितान् ॥
प्रमत्तानप्रमत्तान्वा नरा मांसार्थिनो भृशम् ।
विध्यन्ति विमुखांश्चापि न च दोषोऽत्र विद्यते ॥
यान्ति राजर्षयश्चात्र मृगयां धर्मकोविदाः ।
तस्सात्त्वं निहतो युद्धे मया बाणेन वानर ॥
सयुध्यन्प्रतियुध्यन्वा यस्माच्छाखामृगोऽह्यसि ।

Rāmāyaṇa 4, 18, 4, 6-22, 26-29, 37-42

After listening patiently Vālī realises that Rāma is right in every way. The necessity of Rāma's action lay in his guilt that lay in his raping his brother's wife. Secondly Rāma had to keep his word to Sugrīva whom he treated as a friend and brother by restoring him his wife along with a kingdom won. The third point was the right of the princes to hunt animals not necessarily always by fighting in front of them and killing them in any position or situation by any contrivance, and Vālī is so completely convinced of his guilt and the justification in Rāma's action, that with folded hands he accepts his guilt and addresses Rāma 'Oh! best among men! undoubtedly, it is exactly as you say. How could I, so lowly, reply one so lofty as you. Forgive me for my earlier remarks uttered by my own delusion and overlook this my fault. You know the true essence of things, always bent on the good of the people. Your mind is ever clear in achieving a purpose through proper methods. You should protect me who had strayed from *dharma* by your righteous words as you comprehend *dharma* so well. I am not so worried about myself nor even of Tārā or the others as I am concerned about my son Aṅgada of golden bracelet, foremost in good qualities, fondled by me from his childhood, who would in great grief miss me so much and would wither like a tank with its water completely dried. My only son, my beloved, born of Tārā, is very young and immature, but yet valiant, deserves your protection. You are the protector and the teacher of the right path. As you love Bharata and Lakshmaṇa, so you should treat Sugrīva and Aṅgada. You should also assure that Sugrīva does not

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insult poor Tārā who appears almost besmeared by my own wickedness. Blessed by you, Sugrīva can rule the kingdom in obedience to your wish. He could even win heaven and rule the earth with your help. Welcoming death at your hands, even though dissuaded by Tārā, I had come to fight Sugrīva.' Having so spoken with reverence Vālī became silent. Rāma now comforted Vālī whose vision was now quite clear. Sweetly spoke Rāma, the sense of his utterance couched in *dharma*, 'You should not agitate yourself on this account. You should think neither of me or yourself; in your case, I had decided according to *dharma*; when punishment is meted out and the culprit is punished, neither the punisher nor the punished come to grief. Hence, having received punishment, you are free from your guilt and are restored to your original purity on the path of virtue. Abandon all grief, illusion and fear that may lurk in your heart. Just as Aṅgada is dear to you, he shall be undoubtedly so to both Sugrīva and myself:

यत्त्वमात्थ नरश्रेष्ठ तदेवं नात्र संशयः ।
प्रतिवक्तुं प्रकृष्टे हि नापकृष्टस्तु शक्नुयात् ॥
यदयुक्तं मया पूर्वं प्रमादादुक्तमप्रियम् ।
तत्रापि खलु में दोषं कर्तुं नार्हसि राघव ॥
त्वं हि दृष्टार्थतत्वज्ञः प्रजानां च हिते रतः ।
कार्यकारणसिद्धौ ते प्रसन्ना बुद्धिरव्यया ॥
मामप्यगतधर्माणं व्यतिक्रान्तपुरस्कृतम् ।
धर्मसंहितया वाचा धर्मज्ञ परिपालय ॥
न त्वात्मानमहं शोचे न तारां न च बान्धवान् ।
यथा पुत्रं गुणश्रेष्ठमङ्गदं कनकाङ्गदम् ॥
स ममादर्शनाद्दीनो बाल्यात्प्रभृति लालितः ।
तटाक इब पीताम्बुरुपशोषं गमिष्यति ॥
बालश्चाकृतबुद्धिश्च एकपुत्रश्च मे प्रियः ।
तारेयो राम भवता रक्षणीयो महाबलः ॥
मुग्रीवे चाङ्गदे चैव विधत्स्व मतिमुत्तमाम् ।
त्वं हि शास्ता च गोप्ता च कार्याकार्यविधौ स्थितः ॥
या ते नरपते वृत्तिर्भरते लक्ष्मणे च या ।
सुग्रीवे चाङ्गदे राजंस्तां त्वमाधातुमर्हसि ॥
मद्दोषकृतदोषां तां यथा तारां तपस्विनीम् ।
सुग्रीवो नावमन्येत तथावस्थातुमर्हसि ॥
त्वया ह्यनुगृहीतेन राज्यं शक्यमुपासितुन् ।
त्वद्वशे वर्तमानेन तव चित्तानुवर्तिना ॥

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शक्यं दिवं चार्जयितुं वसुधां चापि शासितुम् ।
त्वत्तोऽहं वधमाकांक्षन् वार्यमाणोऽपि तारया ।।
सुग्रीवेण सह भ्रात्रा द्वन्द्वयुद्धमुपागतः ।
इत्युक्त्वा सन्नतो रामं विरराम हरीश्वरः ।।
स तमाश्वासयद्रामो वालिनं व्यक्तदर्शनम् ।
समसम्पन्नया वाचा धर्मतत्वार्थयुक्तवा ।।
न सन्तापस्त्वया कार्य एतदर्थं प्लवंगम ।
न वयं भवता चिन्त्या नाप्यात्मा हरिसत्तम ।।
वयं भवद्विशेषेण धर्मतः कृतनिश्चयाः ।
दण्ड्ये यः पातयेद्दण्डं दण्ड्यो यश्चापि दण्ड्यते ।।
कार्यकारणसिद्धार्थावुभौ तौ नावसीदतः ।
तद्भवान् दण्डसंयोगादस्माद्विगतकिल्बिषः ।।
गतः स्वां प्रकृतिं धर्म्यां धर्मदृष्टेन वर्त्मना ।
त्यज शोकं च मोहं च भयं च हृदये स्थितम् ।।
त्वया विधानं हर्यग्र्य न शक्यमतिवर्तितुम् ।
यथा त्वय्यङ्गदो नित्यं वर्तते वानरेश्वर ।।
तथा वर्तेत सुग्रीवे मयि चापि न संशयः ।।

Rāmāyaṇa, 4, 18, 47-65

Vibhīshaṇa in his most natural fraternal love forgets aught else of Rāvaṇa, and seeing his corpse lying on the battlefield, is so overcome with grief that he laments recalling all his great and noble distinctions and feels ever so much that being hostile to good counsel he could not but end up with coming to this inevitable state of deep slumber never more to rise:

भ्रातरं निहतं दृष्ट्वा शयानं रामनिर्जितम् ।
शोकवेगपरीतात्मा विललाप विभीषणः ।।
वीर विक्रान्त विख्यात विनीत नयकोविद ।
महार्हशयनोपेत किं शेषेऽद्य हतो भुवि ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 112, 1-2

But some time later when Rāma asks him to take back home all the lamenting wives of Rāvaṇa and perform his obsequies, Vibhīshaṇa, on second thought, considering the several wicked acts of Rāvaṇa and particularly his carrying away the spouse of another, which was all opposed to *dharma*, expresses that it was improper on his part to do the obsequies of so wicked a person, who in the garb of a brother was yet an enemy revelling in wickedness. To this Rāma

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gives the most befitting reply and exhorts him to do the funeral. 'I should indeed do what is good for you; my success here lay in your help. I must indeed tell you what is befitting and just. No doubt Rāvaṇa was steeped in *adharma*, untruth and had all demonaic qualities. Yet, he was so great, so valiant, a terror to the world. All enmity ends with death. My purpose is achieved, as I have punished and killed him. What he is to me, he is equally to you. Please do his obsequies. You know *dharma*. Rāvaṇa certainly deserves all the funeral rites according to scriptural code at your hands, by the performance of which you would only heighten your fame:

त्यक्तधर्मव्रतं क्रूरं नृशंसमनृतं तथा ।
नाहमर्होऽस्मि संस्कर्तुं परदाराभिमर्शिनम् ॥
भ्रातृरूपो हि मे शत्रुरेष सर्वाहिते रतः ।
रावणो नार्हते पूजां पूज्योऽपि गुरुगौरवात् ॥...
तवापि मे प्रियं कार्यं त्वत्प्रभावाच्च मे जितम् ।
अवश्यं तु क्षमं वाच्यो मया त्वं राक्षसेश्वर ॥
अधर्मानृतसंयुक्तः कामं त्वेष निशाचरः ।
तेजस्वी बलवान् शूरः संयुगेषु च नित्यशः ॥
शतक्रतुमुखैर्देवैः श्रूयते न पराजितः ।
महात्मा बलसम्पन्नो रावणो लोकरावणः ॥
मरणान्तानि वैराणि निर्वृत्तं नः प्रयोजनम् ।
क्रियतामस्य संस्कारो ममाप्येष यथा तव ॥
त्वत्सकाशाद्दशग्रीवः संस्कारं विधिपूर्वकम् ।
प्राप्तुमर्हति धर्मज्ञ त्वं यशोभाग्भविष्यसि ॥

Rāmāyaṇā 6, 114, 94-96, 98-103

Kshemendra in this context makes Rāma's statement even more lucid, and the elaboration acts as a commentary, since here, Rāma, irrespective of whether Ravaṇa was a great hero or not, even if he were only the worst and fallen, would still insist on a kinsmen performing what was his moral and spiritual obligation towards the corpse. Anyone, particularly a noble hearted one, should honour and protect even the most wicked in the peril of discomfiture, even an enemy in grief, high or low, friend or foe, dead are alive. How can arise love or hatred towards anybody's corpse. Whether endowed with qualities or lacking in them, or fallen from any state, relatives have to be obliged and honoured. This is the eternal code of action

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of the good:

उद्वृत्तो दैन्यमापन्नः शत्रुर्व्यसनमागतः ।
माननीयोऽभिरक्ष्यश्च विशेषेण मनस्विभिः ॥
महाजनो वा दीनो वा वयस्यः शत्रुरेव वा ।
गतासवः समा रागद्वेषः कस्य कलेबरे ॥
गुणिनो गुणहीना वा ज्ञातयः प्रच्युता पदात् ।
अनुग्राह्याश्च पूज्याश्च स्थितिरेषा सतां सदा ॥

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 7, 29-31

Again, Rāma's desire to follow the highest code of conduct is seen in his chiding of Vibhīshaṇa for allowing his men to ward off the monkeys that all rushed in a body to have a glimpse of Sītā being brought in a palanquin to meet Rāma—Sītā whose separation Rāma so lamented and to win back whom such a great battle had ensued in which they had all so enthusiastically participated. Rāma addresses Vibhīshaṇa, 'Why is it that disregarding me, you have allowed these our companions to be thwarted? Stop this. These are all our own. Neither the walls of the house, nor the clothes that drape, nor the steep parapets act as veils. These are not indeed a royal prerogative. For a woman character is the protecting veil. The sight of a woman is not sinful in a situation of grief, calamity, battle, selection of the bridegroom, sacrifice or marriage. This Sītā is now on the battlefield and in great peril. There could be no wrong in seeing her and specially so in my company:

उत्सार्यमाणांस्तान् दृष्ट्वा समन्ताज्जातसम्भ्रमान् ।
दाक्षिण्यात्तदमर्षाच्च वारयामास राघवः ॥
संरब्धश्चाब्रवीद्रामश्चक्षुषा प्रदहन्निव ।
विभीषणं महाप्राज्ञं सोपालम्भमिदं वचः ॥
किमर्थं मामनादृत्य क्लिश्यते ऽयं त्वया जनः ।
निवर्तयैनमुद्योगं जनोऽयं स्वजनो मम ॥
न गृहाणि न वस्त्राणि न प्राकारास्तिरस्क्रियाः ।
नेदृशा राजसत्कारा वृत्तमावरणं स्त्रियाः ॥
व्यसनेषु न कृच्छ्रेषु न युद्धेषु स्वयंवरे ।
न क्रतौ न विवाहे च दर्शनं दुष्यति स्त्रियः ॥
सैषा युद्धगता चैव कृच्छ्रे च महति स्थिता ।
दर्शनेऽस्या न दोषः स्यान्मत्समीपे विशेषतः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 117, 23-28

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In this context Kshemendra adds almost a commentary to the text of Vālmīki by elaborating Rāma's remarks. 'How is it that all these who were my own people in the battle have now become total strangers. It is they who had created this bridge on the ocean like wonder personified. It was all for this Sītā, and naturally they are curious to know how she looks and who she is. All the subjects are like children to the king. Let them all have a look at Jānakī. In grief, in festivity, in a battle, the sight of a princess is not forbidden. Women are not protected and worshipped by enclosing them within the walls of the harem or by the wrapping of clothes as veils, or even by warding off people in the vicinity. The height of their glory lies in their character. Like supreme knowledge by discriminative thought, like utterance by its truth, like knowledge by adherence to the path of virtue, a woman is worshipped by the nobility of her character:

युद्धे ममैते स्वजनाः कथं नु परतां गताः ।
यत्कृतो विस्मयो मूर्त इव सेतुर्महोदधौ ॥
बत सा कीदृशी सीतेत्येषामेवास्ति संशयः ।
पुत्रपक्षे प्रजा राज्ञस्तस्मात्पश्यन्तु जानकीन् ॥
व्वसनोत्सवयुद्धेषु नादृश्या राजयोषितः ।
नान्तःपुरे नं वासोभिर्न जनोत्सारणैः पुरः ॥
भवन्ति पूजिता नार्य शीलं तासां समुन्नतिः ।
विद्येवात्मविवेकेन सत्येनेव सरस्वती ।
प्रज्ञया धर्ममार्गेण नारी शीलेन पूज्यते ॥

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 7, 75-78

Generally in the enthusiasm to do a good turn to another who had done him good, one would watch for a possible occasion when he could come to the other's help, which is as good as welcoming or even hoping for a calamity for the other enabling his chance to render help. Rāma is so noble that he would prefer to remain obliged all his life without a chance to do a good turn. He tells Hanumān 'Let the great good turn that you have rendered completely get assimilated in me, and let there be no occasion for me to do you a good turn. It is only one in peril that becomes the recipient of the return of a good turn':

मदंगे जीर्णतां यातु यत्त्वयोपकृतं कपे ।

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नरः प्रत्युपकाराणामापत्स्वायाति पात्रताम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 40, 23

Rāma is so conscious of his duty that one small forced respite for three days sets him almost contemplating how great was direlection of duty. Never a day had passed without Rāma regularly attending to his kingly duties. He expresses this to Lakshmaṇa. 'Four days have elapsed since I attended to my work with the citizens of Ayodhyā and the rest from all over the country. This hiatus in conduct vitally pinches my heart. Call all our subjects, our priests and ministers, all those that demand justice, men or women. The king who does not perform his daily duty towards his subjects undoubtedly falls into the most ghastly inescapable hell:

चत्वारो दिवसाः सौम्य कार्यं पौरजनस्य वै ।
अकुर्वाणस्य सौमित्रे तन्मे मर्मणि कृन्तति ॥
अहूयन्तां प्रकृतयः पुरोधा मन्त्रिणस्तथा ।
कार्यार्थिनश्च पुरुषाः स्त्रियो वा पुरुषर्षभ ।
पौरकार्याणि यो राजा न करोति दिने दिने ।
संवृते नरके घोरे पतितो नात्र संशयः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 53, 4-6

It is only because of this that Rāma allows Śatrughna, come after ever so long to have a sight of Rāma, only a week to stay, and exhorts him to return to attend to his duty as a king in which he is particular he should not fail. Rāma says, 'A king should not be very long away from his seat of duty. The people have to be protected according to the code of royal conduct':

नावसीदन्ति राजानो विप्रवासेषु राघव ।
प्रजा नः परिपाल्या हि क्षत्रधर्मेण राघव ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 72, 14

His advice to Vibhīshaṇa as he leaves for Laṅkā is another noteworthy episode revealing his mind ever revelling in *dharma*. He wants him to be in the closest harmony with Kubera unlike Rāvaṇa who fought with him and robbed him of his aerial car. 'Rule Laṅkā according to the rules of *dharma*, I know you are yourself well versed in *dharma*. Consider Laṅkā as the city not only of rākshasas but also

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of your brother Kubera and act in harmony with him. Never allow your mind to stray into the opposite of *dharma.*

लङ्कां प्रशाधि धर्मेण धर्मज्ञस्त्वं मतो मम ।
पुरस्य राक्षसानां च भ्रातुर्वैश्रवणस्य च ॥
मा च बुद्धिमधर्मे त्वं कुर्या राजन् कथं चन ।

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 40, 9-10

It is exactly this eye of Rāma towards the nuances of *dharma* that gives us a series of questions that Rāma put and which form a wonderful moral code for kings. When Bharata meets Rāma, Rāma makes enquiries of the welfare in his kingdom. This whole canto is called *Kachchitsarga.*

'Is the spiritual preceptor, so humble though born of the noblest family, immensely well read and free from jealousy, a seer as it were, properly honoured by you. Does he, versed in the code of the ritual, direct you to tend the fires calling your attention at the appropriate time and enlighten you at the precise moment of the sacrifice in performance and yet to be done. Do you revere properly the celestials, the manes, the servants, elders on par with our parents, elderly folk, physicians that look after the body and the Brāhmaṇas who look to the spiritual needs? Do you specially regard the preceptor Sudhanvā who is well versed both in archery and political science. Have you appointed as ministers heroes equal to you and worthy, knowledgeable, complete in continence, of high birth, who could act by a mere cue. The Counsel of ministers, well versed in political science, who know how to keep a secret and offer their advice in secrecy, is the root of all victory for kings. I hope you have not given room to somnolence, awake and alert as occasion requires. Do you in the later half of the night ponder over the proper collection and use of wealth. I hope you do not hold council with too few or too many. I hope the result of your counsel does not go against the kingdom. I hope, having determined what is easily begun but yields abundant fruit, it is started expeditiously and not delayed. I hope all your accomplishments are totally meritorious. Kings know that all the acts that can be done should not be done. I hope your counsel is understood by you and your ministers by putting them to the test of logic and practical purpose and found not wanting. I hope you single out a

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single wise man from a thousand fools. This wise one could achieve the best and the most propitious even in difficult situations. If the king relies on a thousand fools or even a ten thousand, he cannot in the least be benefited. Even a single learned minister, heroic, expert and well-versed, could lead the king or prince to the highest prosperity. Do you engage your most important servants on important tasks, the middling on the second best, and the lowermost in the less important functions. Do you engage ministers with a comprehensive knowledge of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*, incorruptible, that come by succession through their forefathers, on the most important tasks? I hope you and your ministers are not blamed for tormenting the subjects by cruel punishments. I hope your sacrificial priests do not consider you sinful and fallen, unfit for the ritual like women the passionate one forcing himself on them. If the physician that is tricky and misleading, the servant that maligns, or a hero that craves for wealth, is not killed, the king himself would get killed. Have you made him the commander-in-chief of the army who is bold, valiant, manly, strong, pure, of high birth, learned and able? Are all the chiefs of your army strong and experienced in battle, noted for their valour, after properly proving their worth? I hope you appropriately render unto each of your army, provisions and pay in proper time without delay. Those in service are provoked and act inimically towards their masters when payments are not made in time. This is a great calamity indeed. Are all those around you of noble birth and loving towards you? Would all of them give even their lives if need be to achieve your purpose? Have you made your choice of your representatives from the country by selecting the knowledgeable, polite, readywit and truthful? Do you understand through your spies sent in triads unknown to one another, the position and attitude of eighteen in your opposite camp, namely, the minister, priest, crownprince, commander of the army, gateguard, chamberlain, jailor, treasurer, conveyor of royal warrants, judge, attorney, courtier, bursar, accountant, city mayor, governor, forest ranger, police chief, water works engineer, chief of mines, and fifteen in your own, omitting the first three. I hope you do not disregard the castaways, the enemies, the counter forces and the weak ones. I hope you do not respect atheistic Brāhmaṇas as they are clever in misleading, childish and arrogent in the false notion of their wisdom. These perverse scholars with their mind diverted only to logic, and ignoring the

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prinicipal *dharmaśāstras* indulge in meaningless argument. Do you properly protect Ayodhyā, rich and prosperous, inhabited by our heroic ancestors, true to its name unassailable, with impregnable gates, crowded in its troops of elephants, horses, and chariots, with Brāhmaṇas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and others engaged in their various trades, all of them of continence, enthusiastic, of noble qualities and in thousands, and rich in able physicians and citizens happy and gay, teeming with its mansions of various shapes, decorated by hundreds of temples and sacred trees, with men and womenfolk beaming with joy engaged in congregations and festivities, beautified by fountains and pools, the countryside well ploughed, abundant in crops, rich in cattle, animals, pleasantly river-fed, free from depredations of wild animals, and devoid of every kind of fear, enriched by mineral wealth, abandoned by sinful folk, and ruled ever so long and wisely by our ancestors. I hope the countryside is prosperous, and you are loving towards the plowmen, cowherds and those looking after cattle. The folk engaged in animal husbandry in the countryside promote the happiness of the kingdom. I hope you help to maintain them well by removal of tolls and tithes. All the subjects in the kingdom have to be protected by the king in consonance with righteousness. I hope you comfort the sorrowing and take good care of them. I hope you are not credulous in trusting all that people say, nor disclose what is to be kept a secret. Are the elephant forests well taken care of and the cattle looked after? I hope you are not content with what you have and try to increase the wealth of special breeds of elephants and horses in the kingdom. I hope you daily present yourself in regal splendour in the palace and on the high road early in the forenoon. I hope all the craftsmen approach you without undue trepidation and do not stay away in abject fear. Are all your fortresses equipped with treasure, corn, weapons and water supply, as well as mechanical aids for battle with mechanics and bowmen? Does your income exceed your expenditure? I hope no portion of your treasure goes to the undeserving. Is your expenditure properly assigned for the worship of deities, the manes, Brāhmaṇas, guests, warriors, and friendly folk. I believe that the pure and innocent, accused of theft, are not punished by the shortsightedness of judges ill-versed and blind in law. I hope the thief caught in action, questioned timely and with evidence of guilt, is not released by any judge hankering for wealth. I hope only those ministers of yours who are well read and

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free from desires look into the cases of rich men in trouble. If a king rules with favouritism, the tears shed by the innocent, wrongfully accused and punished, kill generations of the ruler's progeny and cattle. Do you honour in thought, speech and action knowledgeable elders, youngsters of extraordinary knowledge and physicians well versed in their lore, bow to the preceptors, the bountiful, the sages, guests, deities, sacred trees and all of celestial glory. I hope by your love of *kāma*, you do not overlook *artha*, and *dharma*. I take it that the Brāhmaṇas around you well versed in *śāstras* and hailing from cities and countryside, bless and wish you prosperity. I presume that with an awareness of appropriate time you allocate it for *artha*, *dharma* and *kāma*, which undoubtedly would secure you the highest success. I hope you are rid of the fourteen royal blemishes, atheism, falsehood, anger, oversight, delay, refusal to see the wisdom of the wise men, laziness, slavery to the five senses, counsel of none other than oneself on important matters, dependence on the counsel of the perverse, hesitation in action after a decision, inability to hold a secret, inaction in deeds of merit, and indiscriminate simultaneous quick action against opponents, frittering away strength without concentration on one success after another at a time. Do you well understand and avoid or limit appropriately the ten *vargas*, i.e. hunting, play of dice, snooze in daytime, calumny, women, drink, musical and dance entertainments, aimless wandering, unbridled behaviour, take care of the five *vargas*, i.e. fortification in regard to reservoirs of water, mountains, forests, barren soil and desert, appropriately follow the four expedients, i.e. appeasement, liberal gift, sowing dissensions, and striking, keep in close unison the seven components, i.e. the king, minister, kingdom, fortification, treasury, army, and true friend, avoid the eightfold *varga* i.e. slander, bravado, malice, jealousy, envy, unjust appropriation, cruelty in utterance and action, undue anger and regulate another group that comprises agriculture, trade, fortification, bridge-building and dams, elephant taming, mines, taxation, and rehabilitation, promote the three-fold *śaktis*, *prabhu*, *utsāha* and *mantra* and study and interpretation of the three *Vedas* as well?. Do you control your senses, use the *shāḍguṇya*, six expedients, i.e. peace, war, march, halt, dissension, and surrender; take account of calamities both divine wrath (*daiva-vyasana*) i.e. fire, flood, pestilence, famine and epidemic, and human excesses (*mānusha-vyasana*), i.e. government officers, robbers, enemies, royal favourites, covetous ruler; win over

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from the opponents four categories (*kṛityas*) by royal strategy i.e. the unpaid disgruntled, the insulted smarting. the angered innocent, the terrorised timid; and allow no quarter to the twentyfold *varga*, i.e. too young, too old, of chronic disease, the excommunicated, the timid, the fearful, the miser, the detacher, the passionate, unsteady in mind and plans, the reviler of gods and saints, the accursed by fate, the fortune teller, the famished by drought, the defeated in battle, the one from a wrong place, the inimical to many, the ill-fated, the too true. Do you take account of five components (*prakṛitivarga*) i.e. minister, territory, fortification, treasury and army; watch the twelve fold circle of near and distant neighbour kings (*maṇḍala*) in the front, rear, intermediary and indifferent or neutral; march on expedition in fivefold manner (*yātrā*) i.e. seize by combat (*vigṛihya*), alliance for peace (*sandhāya*), partnership in friendship (*sambhūya*), combating another before reaching the main target of attack (*prasaṅga*), ignoring the target by confidence in our strength and attacking the foe's friend (*upekshya*), practice the battle array *vyūha* in *daṇḍavidhāna*, follow the method of *dvaidhībhāva* or duplicity by *sandhivigraha*? Do you take the counsel of ministers, four or three, the entire council or a chosen few, accordieg to the need of each occasion? Are the *Vedas* fulfilling your aims and do all your actions bear fruit? Is your married life and erudition fruitful? Does your mind proceed on the lines that I have recounted? Proper utilisatin of *dharma*, *kāma* and *artha* bring you long life and fame. Do you follow the same true path that our fathers and our forefathers trod? Probably you never taste anything sweet without offering it to friends that may desire it. The erudite king who rules according to *dharma*, ever noble in thought, holding out the rod to his subjects only when necessary, would acquire sovereignty of the entire earth here and hereafter win heaven as well:

स कच्चिद्ब्राह्मणो विद्वान्धर्मनित्यो महाद्युतिः ।
इक्ष्वाकूणामुपाध्यायो यथावत्तात पूज्यते ॥
सा तात कच्चित्कौसल्या सुमित्रा च प्रजावती ।
सुखिनी कच्चिदार्या च देवी नन्दति कैकयी ॥
कच्चिद्विनयसम्पन्नः कुलपुत्रो बहुश्रुतः ।
अनसूयुरनुद्रष्टा सत्कृतः स पुरोहितः ॥
कच्चिदग्निषु ते यक्तो विधिज्ञो मतिमान् ऋजुः ।
हुतं च होष्यमाणं च काले वेदयते सदा ॥

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कच्चिद्देवान् पितॄन् भृत्यान्गुरून् पितृसमानपि ।
वृद्धांश्च तात वैद्यांश्च ब्राह्मणांश्चाभिमन्यसे ।।
इष्वस्त्रबरसम्पन्नमर्थशास्त्रविशारदम् ।
सुधन्वानमुपाध्यायं कच्चित्त्वं तात मन्यसे ।।
कच्चिदात्मसमाः शूराः श्रुतवन्तो जितेन्द्रियाः ।
कुलीनाश्चेङ्गितज्ञाश्च कृतास्ते तात मन्त्रिणः ।।
मन्त्रो विजमूयलं हि राज्ञां भवति राघव ।
सुसंवृतो मन्त्रधरैरमात्यैः शास्त्रकोविदैः ।।
कच्चिन्निद्रावशं नैषीः कच्चित्काले प्रबुध्यसे ।
कच्चिच्चापररात्रेषु चिन्तयस्यर्थनैपुणम् ।।
कच्चिन्मंत्रयसे नैकः कच्चिन्न वहुभिः सह ।
कच्चित्ते मन्त्रितो मन्त्रो राष्ट्रं न परिधावति ।।
कच्चिदर्थं विनिश्चित्य लघुमूलं महोदयम् ।
क्षिप्रमारभसे कर्तुं न दीर्घयसि राघव ।।
कच्चित्ते सुकृतान्येव कृतरूपाणि वा पुनः ।
विदुस्ते सर्वकार्याणि न कर्तव्यानि पार्थिव ।।
त्वया वा तव चामात्यैर्बुध्यते तात मन्त्रितम् ।
कच्चित्सहस्रमूर्खाणामेकमिच्छसि पण्डितम् ।।
पण्डितो ह्यर्थकृच्छ्रेषु कुर्यान्निःश्रेयसं महत् ।
सहस्राण्यपि मूर्खाणां यद्युपास्ते महीपतिः ।।
अथवाप्ययुतान्येव नास्ति तेषु सहायता ।
एकोऽप्यमात्यो मेधावी शूरो दक्षो विचक्षणः ।।
राजानं राजपुत्रं वा प्रापयेन्महतीं श्रियम् ।
कच्चिन्मुख्या महत्स्वेव मध्यमेषु च मध्यमाः ।।
जघन्यास्तु जघन्येषु भृत्या कर्मसु योजिताः ।
अमात्यानुपधातीतान् पितृपैतामहान् शुचीन् ।।
श्रेष्ठाञ्श्रेष्ठेषु कच्चित्त्वं नियोजयति कर्मसु ।
कच्चिन्नोग्रेण दण्डेन भृशमुद्वेजितप्रजम् ।।
राष्ट्रं तवानुजानन्ति मन्त्रिणः कैकयीसुत ।
कच्चित्त्वां नावजानन्ति याजकः पतितं यथा ।।
उग्रप्रतिग्रहीतारं कामयानमिव स्त्रियः ।
उपायकुशलं वैद्यं भृत्यं सन्दूषणे रतम् ।।
शूरमैश्वर्यकामं च यो न हन्ति स वध्यते ।
कच्चिद्धृष्टश्च शूरश्च मतिमाम् घृतिमान् शुचिः ।।
कुलीनश्चानुरक्तश्च दक्षः सेनापतिः कृतः ।
बलवन्तश्च कच्चित्ते मुख्या युद्धविशारदाः ।।
दृष्टापदाना विक्रान्तास्त्वया सत्कृत्य मानिताः ।
कच्चिद्वलत्य भक्तं च वेततं च यथोचितम् ।।

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सम्प्राप्तकालं दातव्यं ददासि न विलम्बसे ।
कालातिक्रमणाच्चैव भक्तवेतनयोर्भृताः ।।
भर्तुः कुप्यन्ति दुष्यन्ति सोऽनर्थः सुमहान् स्मृतः ।।
कच्चित्सर्वेऽनुरक्तास्त्वां कुलपुत्राः प्रधानतः ।
कच्चित्प्राणांस्तवार्थेषु संत्यजन्ति समाहिताः ।।
कच्चिज्जानपदो विद्वान् दक्षिणः प्रतिभानवान् ।
यथोक्तवादी दूतस्ते कृतो भरत पण्डितः ।।
कच्चिदष्टादशान्येषु स्वपक्षे दश पञ्च च ।
त्रिभिस्त्रिभिरविज्ञातैर्वेत्सि तीर्थानि चारणैः ।।
कश्चिद्व्यपास्तानहितान् प्रतियातांश्च सर्वदा ।
दुर्बलाननवज्ञाय वर्तसे रिपुसूदन ।।
कच्चिन्न लौकायतिकान् ब्राह्मणान् तात सेवसे ।
अनर्थकुशला ह्येते बालाः पण्डितमानिनः ।।
धर्मशास्त्रेषु मुख्येषु विद्यमानेषु दुर्बुधाः ।
बुद्धिमान्वीक्षिकीं प्राप्य निरर्थं प्रवदन्ति ते ।।
वीरैरध्युषितं पूर्वमस्माकं तातपूर्वकैः ।
सत्यनामां दृढद्वारां हस्त्यश्वरथसंकुलाम् ।।
ब्राह्मणैः क्षत्रियैर्वैश्यैः स्वकर्मनिरतैः सदा ।
जितेन्द्रियैर्महोत्साहैः वृतामार्यैः सहस्रशः ।।
प्रासादैर्विविधाकारैर्वृतां वैद्यजनाकुलाम् ।
किच्चित्समुदितां स्फीतांमयोध्यां परिरक्षसि ।।
कच्चिच्चैत्यशतैर्जुष्टः सुनिविष्टजनाकुलः ।
देवस्थानैः प्रपाभिश्च तटाकैश्चोपशोभितः ।।
प्रहृष्टनरनारीकः समाजोत्सवशोभितः
सुकृष्टसीमा पशुमान् हिंसाभिरभिवर्जितः ।।
अदेवमातृको रम्यः श्वापदैः परिवर्जितः ।
परित्यक्तो भयैः सर्वैः खनिभिश्चोपशोभितः ।।
विवर्जितो नरैः पापैर्मम पूर्वैः सुरक्षितः ।
कच्चिज्जनपदः स्फीतः सुखं वसति राघव ।।
किच्चित्ते दयिताः सर्वे कृषिगोरक्षजीविनः ।
वार्तायां संश्रितस्तात लोको हि सुखमेधते ।।
तेषां गुप्तिपरीहारैः कच्चित्ते धारणं कृतम् ।
रक्ष्या हि राज्ञा धर्मेण सर्वे विषयवासिनः ।।
कच्चित्स्त्रियः सांत्वयसि कच्चित्ताश्च सुरक्षिताः ।
कच्चिन्न श्रद्दधास्यासां कच्चिद्गुह्यं न भाषसे ।।
कच्चिन्नागवनं गुप्तं कच्चित्ते सन्ति धेनुकाः ।
कच्चिन्न गणिकाश्वानां कुञ्जराणां च तृप्यसि ।।
कच्चिद्दर्शयसे नित्यं मनुष्याणां विभूषितम् ।
उत्थायोत्थाय पूर्वाह्णे राजपुत्र महापथे ।।

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कच्चिन्नु सर्वे कर्मान्ताः प्रत्यक्षास्तेऽविशङ्कया ।
सर्वे वा पुनरुत्सृष्टा मध्यमेवात्र कारणम् ।।
कच्चित्सर्वाणि दुर्गाणि धनधान्यायुधोदकैः ।
यन्त्रैश्च परिपूर्णानि तथा शिल्पिधनुर्धरैः ।।
आयस्ते विपुलः कच्चित् कच्चिदल्पतरो व्ययः ।
अपात्रेषु न ते कच्चित्कोशो गच्छति राघव ।
देवतार्थे च पित्रर्थे ब्राह्मणाभ्यागतेषु च ।।
योधेषु मित्रवर्गेयु कच्चिद्गच्छति ते व्ययः ।
कच्चिदार्यो विशुद्धात्मा क्षारितश्चोरकर्मणा ।।
अदृष्टः शास्त्रकुशलैर्न लोभाद्बध्यते शुचिः ।
गृहीतश्चैव पृष्टश्च काले दृष्टः सकारणः ।।
कच्चिन्न मुच्यते चोरो धनलोभान्नरर्षभ ।
व्यसने कच्चिदाढ्यस्य दुर्गतस्य च राघव ।
अर्थं विरागाः पश्यन्ति तवामात्या बहुश्रुताः ।
यानि मिथ्याभिशस्तानां पतन्त्यश्रूणि राघव ।।
तानि पुत्रपशून् घ्नन्ति प्रीत्यर्थमनुशासतः ।
कच्चिद्वृद्धांश्च बालांश्च वैद्यमुख्यांश्च राघव ।।
दानेन मनसा वाचा त्रिभिरेतैर्बुभूषसे ।
कच्चिद्गुरूंश्च वृद्धांश्च तापसाम् देवतातिथीन् ।।
चैत्यांश्च सर्वान् सिद्धार्थान् ब्राह्मणांश्च नमस्यसि ।
कच्चिदर्थेन वा धर्ममर्थं धर्मेण वा पुनः ।।
उभौ वा प्रीतिलोभेन कामेन च न बाधसे ।
कच्चिदर्थं च धर्मं च कामं च जयतां वर ।।
विभज्य काले कालज्ञ सर्वान् वरद सेवसे ।
कच्चित्ते ब्राह्मणाः शर्म सर्वशास्त्रार्थकोविदाः ।।
आशंसन्ते महाप्राज्ञ पौरजानपदैः सह ।
नास्तिक्यमनृतं क्रोधं प्रमादं दीर्घसूत्रताम् ।।
अदर्शनं ज्ञानवतामालस्यं पञ्चवृत्तिताम् ।
एकचिन्तनमर्थानामनर्थज्ञैश्च मन्त्रणन् ।।
निश्चितानामनारम्भं मन्त्रस्यापरिरक्षणम् ।
मङ्गलस्याप्रयोगं च प्रत्युत्थानं च सर्वतः ।।
कच्चित्त्वं वर्जयस्येतान् राजदोषांश्चतुर्दश ।
दश पंच चतुर्वर्गान् सप्तवर्गं च तत्वतः ।
अष्टवर्गं त्रिवर्गं च विद्यास्तिस्रश्च राघव ।
इन्द्रियाणां जयं बुद्ध्वा षाड्गुण्यं दैवमानुषम् ।।
कृत्यं विंशतिवर्गं च तथा प्रकृतिमण्डलम् ।
यात्रा दण्डविधानं च द्वियोनी सन्धिविग्रहौ ।।
कच्चिदेतान्महाप्राज्ञ यथावदतुमन्यसे ।
मन्त्रिभिस्त्वं यथोद्दिष्टैश्चतुर्भिस्त्रिभिरेव च ।।

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कच्चित्समस्तैर्व्यस्तैर्वा मन्त्र मन्त्रयसे मिथ: ।
कच्चित्ते सफला वेदा: किच्चत्ते सफला: क्रिया: ।।
कच्चित्ते सफला दारा: कच्चित्ते सफलं श्रुतम् ।
कच्चिदेषैव ते बुद्धिर्यथोक्ता मम राघव ।।
आयुष्या च यशस्या च धर्मकामार्थसंहिता ।
यां वृत्तिं वर्तते तातो यां च न: प्रपितामहा: ।।
तां वृत्तिं वर्तसे कच्चिद्या च सत्पथगा शुभा ।
कच्चित्स्वादुकृतं भोज्यमेको नाश्नासि राघव ।।
कच्चिदाशंसमानेभ्यो मित्रेभ्य: सम्प्रयच्छसि ।
राजा तु धर्मेण हि पालयित्वा महामतिर्दण्डधर: प्रजानाम् ।
अवाप्य कृत्स्नां वसुधां यथावदितश्च्युत: स्वर्गमुपैति विद्वान् ।

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 100, 9-76

Kshemendra, who has taken particular note of this canto revealing Rāma's wisdom in statecraft and approach to *dharma* reflected in his queries to Bharata, has again a whole canto in his *Rāmāyaṇa-mañjarī* which is styled *kachchitka.* 'Do you properly protect yourself by awareness, have ministers that are your well-wishers, multiply your treaure and build up your kingdom, properly maintain your fortifications, strong in your personal bodyguard, and surrounded by good and noble friends? Are the ministers well disposed towards you, especially as you are newly crowned? Have you taken on yourself the position of the captain of the ship of an ancient and mighty empire? Do you counsel with ministers who are not fickle-minded like the wind that indiscriminately takes any scent that it contacts? Is your aggressive enemy scattered up? for even when he is broken, he attempts to break all. Given to pleasures that are an obstacle in the proper judging of your subjects' cases, I hope you are not neglectfully somnolent, an unpraiseworthy attitude, that clouds the light of your discrimination like nocturnal darkness. Have you at least one wise man who could be a jewel to protect your prosperity? This earth is plagued unnecessarily by the weight of thousands of fools. May I take it that you submit yourself to the wise counsel of learned men. May be your royal assembly, like the web of the spider, is not filled with fools jealous without reason, cruel and ever intent on fault-finding. I hope rogues, keen in their envious gaze towards royal prosperity like owls with sharp vision at night, are not dear to you. I hope these rogues, who are like cranes in the lake of royal prosperity, and are engaged in a mere show of their acts of pride and con-

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ciliation do not come together, and impoverish you by skilful stealing. I believe the earth is not rendered fruitless, by unworthy folk, as it were by rats, that burrow and eat up the grain. I take it that you are not rendered hollow by those in your service acting as thieves. I believe your eyes are not directed towards the faces of damsels as to the gently waving lotuses attracting bees and consequently neglect other important affairs. I hope you do not see eye to eye with misers, who avoid all good deeds by their greed and are a target of shame. Their path is easy but they should not be listened to. I have no doubt that as a ruler you treat the people like children and avoid tormenting them with cruel punishments. There can be no protection for the world if the protector himself torments. I hope you skip over such things as form the boundary of *adharma* and act beyond them in the path of virtue. For the miser wealth is wealth, but for the noble-hearted *dharma* is wealth. Riches, like courtesans, are never friendly for any length of time with anyone, as they create trouble through foolishness, render ugly, change colour and are ever fickle and fleetingly coquettish. All sorts of prosperity are generally opposed to *dharma* and all *dharma* causes fortune to perish. *Kāma* or passion destroys both *dharma* and *artha*, and these are avoided by the noblest. Giving away is to protect the subjects. Sacrifices are for enhancing the glory of *dharma*. These are the abundant fruits of the wish-fulfilling tree, namely, royal prosperity. The highest reverence for Brāhmaṇas who know the supreme spirit is the greatest ornament of one of the three royal powers, *prabhuśakti*. It is the great protecting medicine for princes through proper utilisation of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*:

रक्षितात्मा हितामात्यः कोशराष्ट्रविवर्धनः ।
भृतदुर्गो मौलिबलः कच्चित्सन्मित्रवानसि ॥
कच्चित्प्राप्ताभिषेकस्य मन्त्रिणस्तव सम्मताः ।
प्रौढ़राज्यप्रवहणे सम्प्राप्ताः कर्णधारताम् ॥
मन्त्रः कच्चिदचपलैरामोदैरिव मारुतैः ।
कीर्यते तव संमर्दी सर्वं भिन्नो भिनत्ति सः ॥
कच्चित्सुखी प्रजाकार्यविचारपरिपन्थिनीम् ।
निन्द्यां न भजसे निद्रां विवेकालोकयामिनीम् ॥
एकोऽपि पण्डितः कश्चित्तव रक्षामणिः श्रियः ।
मूर्खसंगभरेणेयं पृथ्वी मिथ्यैव पीड्यते ॥
कच्चित्प्रयासि विदुषामुपदेशविधेयताम् ।

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कच्चिदुर्णायुपूर्णेव सभा मूर्खवृता न ते ॥
सदानिमित्तपिशुनाः क्रूराः दोषावलोकिनः ।
राजश्रीरजनींघूकाः खलाः कच्चिन्न ते प्रियाः ॥
दम्भारम्भसमाधाननिसंगनिभृता इव ।
कच्चिन्न ते त्वां मुष्णन्ति धूर्ताः श्रीसरसीबकाः ॥
कच्चिदाखुखुरोत्खातभुक्तबीजेव मेदिनी ।
सुषिरीक्रियते चौरैर्नाधिकारगणैस्तव ॥
ललभावदनाम्भोजविभ्रमभ्रमरावली ।
कच्चिन्न सक्ता दृष्टिस्ते नान्यकार्याणि पश्यति ॥
कच्चिदाकर्ण्य सुलभं लोभं परिभवास्पदम् ।
केवलं त्यक्तसत्कार्यैः कदर्यैः सह पश्यसि ॥
कच्चित्प्रजाः प्रजानाथ नोऽग्रदण्डेन बाधसे ।
शरणं नास्ति लोकेषु परित्राता निहन्ति चेत् ॥
कच्चिदधर्ममर्यादानुत्क्रम्यार्थान् समीहसे ।
धनं धनं कदर्याणां धर्मस्तु महतां धनम् ॥
मूढव्यसनकारिण्यो विकारिण्यः सविभ्रमाः ।
चिरं परिचिताः कस्य वेश्या इव विभूतयः ॥
श्रियो धर्मविरोधिन्यो धर्मः सम्पद्विनाशनः ।
धर्मार्थोत्सादिनः कामा न भवन्ति महात्मनाम् ॥
दानं प्रजापरित्राणं यजनं धर्मरञ्जनम् ।
राज्यकल्पद्रुमस्यैता विपुलाः फलसम्पदः ॥
ब्राह्मणेषु परा भक्तिः प्रभुशक्तेर्विभूषणम् ।
सा हि धर्मार्थकामानां राज्ञां रक्षामहौषधम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 2, 182-198

In spite of his great wisdom in *dharma*, and confidence in his knowledge and practice of *dharma*, Rāma had always an open mind and would accept a correction if he felt convinced. An instance is where Rāma desires to do *Rājasūya* to wipe out the sin of having killed a *Brāhmaṇa* in Rāvaṇa. Rāma tells Bharata that *Rājasūya* is an unending and inexhaustable ethical bridge as it were for winning the highest merit and destroying every kind of sin. But Bharata reminds him of his position as an emperor, the love, affection and regard that the other kings on earth bear towards him, in vanquishing and humiliating so many sovereigns on earth as a necessary corollary of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice which would be purposeless. Oh saintly brother, *dharma* is at its highest in you. The whole world is yours with all its treasures because of your might, and naturally your fame is as great as your valour is beyond measure. Just as we regard you, all the

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kings on earth honour you like the celestials honouring Prajāpati. All your subjects look towards you as a father. You are the refuge of all living beings on earth. How could such a one like you perform this sacrifice, which entails the annihilation of innumerable royal families:

त्वयि धर्मः परं साधो त्वयि सर्वा वसुन्धरा ।
प्रतिष्ठिता महाबाहो यज्ञश्चामितविक्रम ।।
महीपालाश्च सर्वे त्वां प्रजापतिमिवामराः ।
निरीक्षन्ते महात्मानं लोकनाथं यथा वयम् ।।
प्रजाश्च पितृवद्राजन् पश्यन्ति त्वां महाबल ।
पृथिव्या गतिभूतोऽसि प्राणिनामपि राघव ।।
स त्वमेवंविधं यज्ञमाहर्तासि कथं नृप ।
पृथिव्यां राजवंशानां विनाशो यत्र दृश्यते ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 83, 10-13

Rāma immediately appreciates Bharata's arguments and gives up the idea of *Rājasūya*, and instead, launches on an *Aśvamedha* sacrifice which is also purificatory. 'O learned in *dharma*, your words couched in *dharma* and potent in their meaning are really true. Surely the world is to be properly ruled and protected. I take your word and give up the performance of this noblest of sacrifices, *Rājasūya*, as it involves the tormenting of the world, the wise ones should not indulge in such an act. A good and auspicious utterance even from a child should be joyously accepted and implemented:

इदं वचनमक्लीबं त्वया धर्मसमाहितम् ।
व्याहृतं पुरुषव्याघ्र पृथिव्याः परिपालनम् ।।
एष्यदस्मदभिप्रायाद्राजसूयात्क्रतूत्तमात् ।
निवर्तयामि धर्मज्ञ तव सुव्याहृतेन च ।।
लोकपीडाकरं कर्म न कर्तव्यं विचक्षणैः ।
बालानां तु शुभं वाक्यं ग्राह्यं लक्ष्मणपूर्वज ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 83, 18-20

Another instance is Rāma's acquiescence in the wisdom of the explanation of the Ocean personified who addresses him and convinces him how injustified was his anger. Rāma had listened to the wise counsel of Vibhīshaṇa which was convincing. Being the descendent of Sagara whose sons had dug up and magnified the ocean, if Rāma, a

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king, who would not normally ask for anything from anyone, still prayed to the Ocean requesting his help, he would certainly oblige felt Vibhīshaṇa:

समुद्रं राघवो राजा शरणं गन्तुमर्हति ।
खानितः सागरेणायमप्रमेयो महोदधिः ॥
कर्तुमर्हति रामस्य ज्ञातेः कार्यं महोदधिः ।

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 20, 31-32

Rāma assents, bows to the ocean and spreading a holy bed of *kuśa* grass lies in front of it with hands in reverence:

ततः सागरवेलायां दर्भमास्तीर्य राघवः ।
अञ्जलिं प्राङ्मुखः कृत्वा प्रतिशिश्ये महोदधिम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 21, 1

Even with his mind intent on *dharma* and fully aware of his duty to follow *dharma* he knew so well, he so prayed for three days and nights:

स त्रिरात्रोषितस्तत्र नयज्ञो धर्मवत्सलः ।
उपासत तदा रामः सागरं सरितां पतिम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 21, 11

Rāma then gets furious when the ocean took no notice of his reverence and exclaims that patience, straightforwardness and goodness wasted on those who cannot appreciate it results in insult experienced. Everywhere it is the rod raised that is feared and respected and sweet and soothing words do not earn reputation or fame. I shall dry up the ocean by my arrows. The monkeys shall walk over to Laṅkā. So he takes up the bow and shoots arrows like the thunderbolts of Indra.

समुद्रस्य ततः क्रुद्धो रामो रक्तान्तलोचनः ।
समीपस्थमुवाचेदं लक्ष्मणं शुभलक्षणम् ॥
अवलेपः समुद्रस्य न दर्शयति यत्स्वयम् ।
प्रशमश्च क्षमा चैव आर्जवं प्रियवादिता ॥
असामर्थ्यफला ह्येते निर्गुणेषु सतां गुणाः ।
सर्वत्रोत्सृष्टदण्डं च लोकः सत्कुरुते नरम् ॥

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…चापमानय सौमित्रे शरांश्चाशीविषोपमान् ।
समुद्रं शोषयिष्यामि पद्भ्यां यान्तु प्लवङ्गमाः ॥
…संपीड्य च धनुर्घोरं कम्पयित्वा शनैर्जगत् ।
मुमोच विशिखानुग्रान् वज्रानिव शतक्रतुः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 21, 13-16, 22, 26

It becomes too terrible a picture for description, the tumultuous ocean and the terrible tempest raised with intense suffering for all aquatic life, when the Ocean in person attended by his riverine consorts approaches Rāma, hands clasped in adoration (Fig 50), and explains his inability to transgress natural laws divinely ordained. Earth, air, sky, water and light are bound by natural laws. I am unfathomable and unfordable. Neither for pleasure nor for gain or out of fear can I still my waters that shelter innumerable aquatic beings. I suggest a way out for helping your monkeys to cross over. Rāma is convinced in a moment and there is no more argument. He acquiesces in the statement of the ocean and immediately asks him where to aim his unfailing arrow already drawn and to be released.

सहसाभूत्ततो वेगाद्भीमवेगो महोदधिः ।
योजनं व्यतिचक्राम वेलामन्यत्र संप्लवात् ॥
…ततो मध्यात्समुद्रस्य सागरः स्वयमुत्थितः ।
…गङ्गासिन्धुप्रधानाभिरापगाभिः समावृतः ।
सागरः समुपक्रम्य पूर्वमामन्त्र्य वीर्यवान् ॥
अब्रवीत्प्राञ्जलिर्वाक्यं राघवं शरपाणिनम् ।
पृथिवी वायुराकाशमापो ज्योतिश्च राघव ॥
स्वभावे सौम्य तिष्ठन्ति शाश्वतं मार्गमाश्रिताः ।
तत्स्वभावो ममाप्येष यदगाधोऽहमप्लवः ॥
विकारस्तु भवेद्गाध एतत्ते वेदयाम्यहम् ।
न कामान्न च लोभाद्वा न भयात्पार्थिवात्मज ॥
ग्राहनक्राकुलजलं स्तम्भयेयं कथं चन ।
विधास्ये येन गन्तासि विषहिष्ये ह्यहं तथा ॥
ग्राहा न प्रहरिष्यन्ति यावत्सेना तरिष्यति ।
हरीणां तरणे राम करिष्यामि यथा स्थलम् ॥
तमब्रवीत्तदा राम उद्यतो हि नदीपते ।
अमोघोऽयं महाबाणः कस्मिन् देशे निपात्यताम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 22, 15, 17, 24-30

This sudden spurt of anger of Rāma is only short of the blaze

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of Hanumān's anger when he burnt the entire city (Fig 51) with a devastating all-enveloping flame fanned by tempestuous gale like that of the deluge as he thundered like the cloud ending the aeon.

प्रदीप्तमग्निमुत्सृज्य लांगूलाग्रे प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
ननाद हनुमान् वीरो युगान्ते जलदो यथा ॥
श्वसनेन च संयोगादतिवेगो महाबलः ।
कालाग्निरिव संदीप्तः प्रावर्धत हुताशनः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 5, 54, 20-21

But while Hanumān still nursed his anger and suggested to Sītā he would punish the wicked *rākshasīs* that had tormented her, Rāma, convinced that his anger was not justified, immediately calms down. His nobility is voiced in the one remark that he never would recall any ill done to him but remember gratefully even a single good turn done to him even so long after the event.

कथं चिदुपकारेण कृतेनैकेन तुष्यति ।
न स्मरत्यपकाराणां शतमप्यात्मवत्तया ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 1, 11

It is this Rāma that is assessed variously by so many, high and low, friends and enemies, humans and celestials, saints and even the wicked. But everywhere the uniform verdict commends Rāma as a *dharmajña* and *dharmātmā*, though described in different ways in the most interesting manner. We may take instances. Mārīcha, mortally wounded by Rāma but still allowed to live (Fig 52), living in an eternal dread and terror of Rāma, tells Rāvaṇa that Rāma is the very embodiment of *dharma*, saintly and of true valour, and ruler of the entire world like Indra the lord of the celestials:

रामो विग्रहवान् धर्मः साधुः सत्यपराक्रमः ।
राजा सर्वस्य लोकस्य देवानां मघवानिव ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 37,13

He is so great and his divine qualities are so apparent te even rishis that Viśvāmitra tells Daśaratha (Fig 53) 'I know Rāma as the most noble minded, true in valour, highly lustrous; also Vaśishṭha and the sages engaged in the highest penance know the true aspect

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of Rāma:

अहं वेद्मि महात्मानं रामं सत्यपराक्रमम् ।
वशिष्ठोऽपि महातेजा ये चेमे तपसि स्थिताः ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 1, 19, 14-15.

It is the superb human qualities of Rāma, in addition to his knowledge of *dharma* that accounts for his purifying potency as seen in his restoring Ahalyā to the vision and gaze of the world, completely shut up from which she was for ever so long on the curse of Gautama:

सा हि गौतमवाक्येन दुर्निरीक्ष्या बभूव ह ।
त्रयाणामपि लोकानां यावद्रामस्य दर्शनम् ।।
शापस्यान्तमुपागम्य तेषां दर्शनमागता ।

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 49, 18-19.

Kālidāsa very significantly describes this regaining of her original form from that of a stone as due to the power of the dust on Rāma's feet which destroys sin (Fig 54):

प्रत्यपद्यत चिराय यत्पुनश्चारुगौतमवधूः शिलामयी ।
स्वं वपुः स किल किल्बिषच्छिदां रामपादरजसामनुग्रहः ।।

Raghuvaṁśa 11, 34.

Bhavabhūti introduces the incident in a different way in his *Mahāvīracharita*, and makes her approach an assemblage of sages including Viśvāmitra, Rāma and Lakshmaṇa, with Kuśadhvaja, Sītā and Ūrmilā also present. Freed from her curse she arrives and hails Rāma.

'Hail lord of the world! Rāmachandra! hail victory!

Rājā : Revered one: who is this goddess?

Viśvāmitra : This is the wife of the sage Gautama Autathya, named Ahalyā, of whom Āngīrasa Śatānanda was born. Indra loved her. Hence, by his misconduct towards the wife of Gautama, he is styled the lover of Ahalyā. Then the revered Gautama got angry. He imposed total darkness on her sin. Now she is released from that sin

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by the lustre of Rāmachandra.

Rājā: How now, this little child of the solar family has immeasurable supernatural power in such natural abundance.

Sītā: (aside, with affection and love): His greatness is equal to his physical charm.

जय जय जगत्पते रामचन्द्र जय ।

राजा—का पुनरियं देवता ?

विश्वामित्रः—अस्त्यहल्या नाम गौतमस्य महर्षेरौतथ्यस्य धर्मपत्नी यस्या शतानन्द आङ्गीं-रसोऽजायत । तामिन्द्रश्चकमे । तस्मात्तं गौतमदारावस्कन्दिनमहल्याजार इति निर्दिशन्ति । अथ भगवान् मन्युमाप । तस्यां पापमेनमैन्धतमिस्रमभध्ययत् । सेयमद्य रामभद्रतेजसा तस्मादेनसो निरमुच्यत ।

राजा—कथमप्रमेयसहजानुभावसामर्थ्य एष वत्सो वैकर्तनकुमारः ?

सीता—(सस्नेहानुरागं निर्वण्यापवार्य च) शरीरनिर्माणसदृशोऽयमस्यानुभावः ।

Mahāvīracharita 11.

The description of Rāma as each one understood him is almost like *ullekha alaṅkāra*, each speaking from his or her point of view, but all opinions converging only towards a common appreciation of Rāma in the noblest terms as one almost beyond description. Daśaratha himself says that Rāma was born in the noble family of the Ikshvākus like another *dharma* embodied:

इक्ष्वाकूणां कुले जातः साक्षाद्धर्म इवापरः ।

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 21, 6.

Viśvāmitra himself close on this describes Rāma as the embodiment of *dharma*, the greatest of heroes, surpassing the world in his intellect and the very refuge of penance:

एष विग्रहवान् धर्म एष वीर्यवतां वरः ।
एष बुध्यधिको लोके तपसश्च परायम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 21, 10

The citizens of Ayodhyā explain in detail to Dasāratha the noble qualities of Rāma that endear him to them. 'Rāma is the one saint in this world, his valour saturated with truth and *dharma*. Even the

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women of Ayodhyā, young or old, with great fervour pray to the deities morning and evening for the good and welfare of Rāma. That is the love that they have for him because of his great qualities:

रामः सत्पुरुषो लोके सत्यधर्मपरायणः ।
स्त्रियो वृद्धास्तरुण्यश्च सायं प्रातः समाहिताः ।
सर्वान्देवन्नमस्यन्ति रामस्यार्थे मनस्विनः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 2, 52.

When Daśaratha consults his people from Ayodhyā and the large *janapada* domain beyond how they liked the idea of his crowning Rāma as heir apparent, with one accord everyone expresses supreme delight and desires to see their beloved prince Raghuvīra, supremely powerful, always before their eyes seated in majesty on the huge state elephant, coursing along, with the umbrella held by the parasol-bearer over his moon-face, to shade it from the solar rays (Fig. 55):

इच्छामो हि महाबाहुं रघुवीरं महाबलम् ।
गजेन महता यान्तं रामं छत्रावृताननम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 2, 22.

Effective indeed is the rendering of this by Sundareśvara who describes the joyous expression of one and all whose mind craves for Rāma of countless great qualities, moving on his stately elephant, his face shaded by moon-white parasol:

अनेककल्याणगुणैरुपेतं तवात्मजं कामयते मनो नः ।
गजेन यान्तं महता शशाङ्कप्रभातपत्रेण समावृतास्यम् ॥

Sundararāmāyaṇa 3, 12.

It is this that has inspired several later kings to crave for the affection of their subjects and in similar glory to represent themselves, as in the elephant-rider type of Kumāragupta who presents himself as a beloved prince on elephant-back, parasol-covered like Rāma himself (Fig 56).

The people of Ayodhyā go into an ecstacy of joy even in the thought of Rāma, and estimate him in superlative terms. They almost feel overwhelmed by the kindness of Daśaratha and do not know how

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to be sufficiently grateful to him for making Rāma available to them as their crown prince. What a great man this king, scion of the Ikshvāku family, knowing himself to have become aged, desires to crown Rāma as king. We are all indeed most fortunate to know that Rāma is to be our king. May Rāma, who knows the high and low in this world, be entirely our protector for long and ever so long. Rāma is ever free from pride and hauteur, learned, steeped in *dharma*, beloved of his mother, and affectionate towards all of us as he is towards his brothers. May our worthy king Daśaratha, by whose graciousness we are shortly to witness the coronation of Rāma, live long:

अहो महात्मा राजायमिक्ष्वाकुलनन्दनः ।
ज्ञात्वा यो वृद्धमात्मानं रामं राज्येभिषेक्ष्यति ॥
सर्वे ह्यनुगृहीताः स्मो यन्नो रामो महीपतिः ।
चिराय भविता गोप्ता दृष्टलोकपरावरः ॥
अनुद्धतमना विद्वान् धर्मात्मा भ्रातृवत्सलः ।
यथा च भ्रातृषु स्निग्धस्तथास्मास्वपि राघवः ॥
चिरं जीवतु धर्मात्मा राजा दशरथोऽनघः ।
यत्प्रसादेनाभिषिक्तं रामं द्रक्ष्यामहे वयम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 6, 21-24.

Even an humble nurse in the palace household that had known and loved Rāma from his childhood almost bursts with joy when she answers the query of Mantharā explaining the sudden joyous celebrations in the city. Vālmīki actually uses the word *Vidīryamāṇā harsheṇa* which means bursting with joy. Bursting with joy, the nurse happy beyond bounds, inform the hunch-backed one of the highest prosperity for Rāma in his coronation as crown prince:

विदीर्यमाणा हर्षेण धात्री परमया मुदा ।
आचचक्षेऽथ कुब्जायै भूयसीं राघवश्रियम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 7, 10.

Even when Mantharā tries to stir up Kaikeyī, Kaikeyī's love for Rāma, his noble qualities, his affectionate and humble cehaviour towards everyone of the mothers including herself, is so great that she is not in the least ruffled by this (Fig. 57). On the contrary, she is amazed to find that Mantharā, who should rejoice on such an occasion, should feel so aggrieved. She is so happy on this happy event, that she gives the hunch-back an auspicious jewel from her neck, and

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Fig. 55. ...
Ajaṇṭā.

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Kaikeyī of rare beauty asks Mantharā, 'O Mantharā! you have come and given me such happy news. I am delighted. What more can I do for you. I do not see any difference between Rāma and Bharata and I am so happy that our king is crowning Rāma as crown prince:

अतीव सा तु संहृष्टा कैकेयी विस्मयान्विता ।
एकमाभरणं तस्यै कुब्जायै प्रददौ शुभा ॥
दत्वा त्वाभरणं तस्यै कब्जायै प्रमदोत्तमा ।
कैकेयी मन्थरां दृष्ट्वां पुनरेवाब्रवीदिदम् ॥
इदं तु मन्थरे मह्यंमाख्यासि परमं प्रियम् ।
एतन्मे प्रियमाख्यातं भूयः किं वा करोमि ते ॥
रामे वा भरते वाहं विशेषं नोपलक्षये ।
तस्मात्तुष्टास्मि यद्राजा रामं राज्येऽभिषेक्ष्यति ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 7, 32-35.

Even after a second harangue of reiteration by Mantharā, Kaikeyī still speaks of Rāma only in the highest terms with great affection and appreciation of his nobility. She speaks again to Mantharā enthusiatically praising over and over again the great and noble qualities of Rāma. Rāma is indeed learned in *dharma* endowed with great qualities, of great continence, ever grateful, truthful, pure, is the eldest of the kings' sons, and rightly is to be crowned king. He should live long to protect like a father not only his brothers but all the royal retinue. O hunch-backed one, how is it that having heard of the crowning of the prince, such a joyous event, you are strangely enough so distressed!

तां दृष्ट्वा परमप्रीता ब्रुवन्ती मन्थरां ततः ।
रामस्यैव गुणान्देवी कैकेयी प्रशशंस ह ॥
धर्मज्ञो गुणवान् दान्तः कृतज्ञः सत्यवाक् शुचिः ।
रामो राज्ञः सुतो ज्येष्ठो यौवराज्यमतोर्ऽहति ॥
भ्रातॄन् भृत्यांश्च दीर्घायुः पितृवत्पालयिष्यति ।
सन्तप्यसे कथं कुब्जे श्रुत्वा रामाभिषेचनम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 8, 13-15.

She even adds that Rāma, the son of Kausalyā, is even more attached to her and all the more respectful. Just as I love Bharata, I love Rāma all the more. Rāma attends on me and honours me even more than his own mother Kausalyā. If the kingdom is for Rāma, it

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is as good as if it were for Bharata, so far as I am concerned. Rāma considers all his brothers with that great affection as if they were all a part of himself:

यथा मे भरतो मान्यस्तथा भूयोऽपि राघवः ।
कौसल्यातोऽतिरिक्तं च स तु शुश्रूषते हि माम् ॥
राज्यं च यदि रामस्य भरतस्यापि तत्तथा ।
मन्यते हि यथात्मानं तथा भ्रातृंश्च राघवः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 8, 18-19.

When Kaikeyī insists on her boons and wants Rāma to go to the forest, it comes not only as a surprise to Daśaratha but is even an impossibility for him to believe that Kaikeyī who loved Rāma so much for his great qualities should turn so hostile. Fully aware of how well Kaikeyī knew the qualities of Rāma, Daśaratha just to move her heart, cries out detailing the great and noble qualities of Rāma. 'Rāma has won the highest celestial worlds by his truthfulness. He has won over all the hapless by his liberality. He has won the hearts of all his elders by his humble behaviour towards them. A hero, with the bow in his hand, he has won on the battle field all his enemies. Eternally present in Rāma are truth, liberality, penance, sacrifice, friendship, purity, straightforwardness, knowledge, respect towards elders. In such a Rāma, comparable only to the gods in his majesty, and to the sages in his lustre and abundance of straightforwardness, how have you the heart Oh! my queen! to think of evil':

सत्येन लोकान् जयति दीनान् दानेन राघवः ।
गुरून् शुश्रूषया वीरो धनुषा युधि शात्रवान् ॥
सत्यं दानं तपस्त्यागो मित्रता शौचमार्जवम् ।
विद्या च गुरुशुश्रूषा ध्रुवाण्येतानि राघवे ॥
तस्मिन्नार्जवसम्पन्ने देवि देवोपमे कथम् ।
पापमाशंससे रामे महर्षिसमतेजसि॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 12, 29-31.

Rāma's qualities are such, and his behavior towards one and all in the most ideal manner is so touching, that it is not only the father, who usually loves his offspring even ill-disciplined, but the entire population of the kingdom, the people as such, that shower their highest regard and affection beyond measure on him. Vālmīki

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has given it in the most telling fashion, when he says 'even if Rāma is seen only for a minute as he moves away and out of sight, he would attract their mind which it was impossible to call back from him, nor the eyes either. One not so fortunate as to see Rāma or to be seen by him, would feel he was surely accursed in this world; even his own inner self would almost upbraid him for it:

न हि तस्मान्मनः कश्चिच्चक्षुषी वा नरोत्तमात् ।
नरः शक्नोत्यपाक्रष्टुमतिक्रांन्ते च राघवे ॥
यश्च रामं न पश्येत्तु यं च रामो न पश्यति ।
निन्दितः स भवेल्लोके स्वात्माप्येनं विगर्हते ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 17, 13-15.

When Rāma was to go to the forest the wail was not only of Daśaratha, Kausalyā and Sumitrā, but of the entire harem, which bitterly weeps and upbraids Daśaratha for his unworthy action as they consider in allowing Rāma to go to the forest; all this is because of his great qualities. They recount again all those great qualities. 'Rāma from his very childhood behaves towards us all as towards his own mother Kausalyā. Even if scolded, he is never angry and ever avoids all that would rouse anger, and more than that conciliates those in anger. How sad that this Rāma is sent to the forest by our king who has lost his wit, Rāma, who is the only refuge of the entire world.' So lament all the queens of Daśaratha like cows separated from their calves and rail at Daśaratha:

कौसल्यायां यथायुक्तो जनन्यां वर्तते सदा ।
तथैव वर्ततेऽस्मासु जन्मप्रभृति राघवः ॥
न क्रुध्यत्यपशप्तोऽपि क्रोधनीयानि वर्जयन् ।
क्रुद्धान् प्रसादयन् सर्वान् स इतोऽद्य प्रवत्स्यति ॥
अबुद्धिर्बत नो राजा जीवलोकं चरत्ययम् ।
यो गतिं सर्वलोकानां परित्यजति राघवम् ॥
इति सर्वा महिष्यस्ता विवत्सा इव धेनवः ।
पतिमाचुक्रुशुश्चैव सस्वरं चापि चुक्रुशुः।

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 20, 3-6.

The news of Rāma leaving for the forest to render his father truthful take the people of Ayodhyā almost by storm and dismay. Their deep grief is only matched by their wonder that there could be

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one, a prince, who had known the highest pinnacle of prosperity, suddenly and willingly accepting to go almost as a rustic into the forest, completely giving up even creature comforts. All this was due to the fact that by his great qualities, Rāma churned the hearts of the people of Ayodhyā as it were:

विराजयन् राजसुतो राजमार्गं नरैर्वृतम् ।
हृदयानि ममन्थेव जनस्य गुणवत्तया ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 26, 2

When the citizens of Ayodhyā witness Rāma going on foot to meet Daśaratha, their hearts sink and they shed tears. Rāma, who had tasted the highest prosperity (*artha*), who had himself provided the noblest love, freely giving all his affection to all (*kāma*), does not, naturally, out of his regard for *dharma*, want his father to act untruthfully. How can there be a banishment of a son even if he completely lacked in good qualities, and how much more this tragedy that Rāma, who by his character and behaviour won over the entire world, is to be allowed to go, Rāma, devoid of cruelty, abundant in compassion, lofty in learning, worthy in character, wondrous in continence, embodiment of patience, bejewelled as it were by these six noble qualities and naturally, the loftiest of mortals:

ऐश्वर्यस्य रसज्ञः सन् कामिनां चैव कामदः ।
नेच्छत्येवानृतं कर्तुं पितरं धर्मगौरवात् ॥
निर्गुणस्यापि पुत्रस्य कथं स्याद्विप्रवासनम् ।
किं पुनर्यस्य लोकोऽयं जितो वृत्तेन केवलम् ॥
आनृशंस्यमनुक्रोशः श्रुतं शीलं दमः शमः ।
राघवं शोभयन्त्येते षड्गुणाः पुरुषर्षभम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 33, 7, 11-12,

It is the inordinate regard, love and affection for Rāma that make the people of Ayodhyā decide on following him wherever he went, leaving their hearths and homes. 'The entire world is struck as it were by this blow to the prince like the flower-and fruit-laden tree withering by its roots cut. Our Rāma is the sustaining root of all men, the essence of *dharma*, the brilliance of lustre, all the other people are only the flowers, fruit, leaves and branches of this noble tree that is Rāma. Therefore, we should all, like Lakshmaṇa, imme-

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diately with our families follow him wherever he goes, abandoning the pleasure gardens, smiling fields, inviting homes, as our sorrow and joy is completely bound up with that of Rāma, who is the one example of *dharma*, and him we shall follow:

पीडया पीडितं सर्वं जगदस्य जगत्पतेः ।
मूलस्येवोपघातेन वृक्षः पुष्पफलोपगः ॥
मूलं ह्येष मनुष्याणां धर्मसारो महाद्युतिः ।
पुष्पं फलं च पत्रं च शाखाश्चास्येतरे जनाः ॥
ते लक्ष्मण इव क्षिप्रं सपत्न्यः सहबान्धवाः ।
गच्छन्तमनुगच्छामो येन गच्छति राघवः ॥
उद्यानानि परित्यज्य क्षेत्राणि च गृहाणि च ।
एकदुःखसुखा राममनुगच्छाम धार्मिकम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 33, 15-17

Daśaratha also sadly consoles himself in the thought that even if he had wanted, he could not have stopped Rāma from such a *dhārmik* attitude as fulfilling a truthful utterance. 'Oh my child! scion of the Raghu family! you are so completely saturated in *dharma*, with your mind ever on it that it is not possible to turn your mind away from your purpose,:

न हि सत्यात्मनस्तात धर्माभिमनसस्तव ।
विनिवर्तयितुं बुद्धिः शक्यते रघुनन्दन ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 34, 32

Vaśishṭha himself addresses Kaikeyī and tells her that Rāma, wedded to *dharma*, is so great, that nothing could exist without him. 'That can never be a kingdom where Rāma is not the king and that cannot be a forest any more but would immediately become a kingdom where Rāma stays. Oh Kaikeyī! you would personally see for yourself how even animals, wild beasts, birds, even trees and creepers, would go along with Rāma wherever he goes:

न हि तद्भविता राष्ट्रं यत्र रामो न भूपतिः ।
तद्वनं भविता राष्ट्रं यत्र रामो निवत्स्यति ॥
द्रक्ष्यस्यद्यैव कैकेयि पशुव्यालमृगद्विजान् ।
गच्छतः सह रामेण पादपांश्च तदुन्मुखान् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 37, 29, 33

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The citizens of Ayodhyā are so drawn by the great qualities of Rāma that made him their beloved that they plead with Sumantra and implore him to go slow to give them a chance to see Rāma. 'Hold the reins O charioteer! and move slowly and very slowly. Let us have a last look at Rāma's face which would soon become impossible as we can gaze on it no more:

संयच्छ वाजिनां रश्मीन् सूत याहि शनैः शनैः ।
मुखं द्रक्ष्याम रामस्य दुर्दर्शं नो भविष्यति ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 40, 22

The more Rāma strove for *dharma* and on that account wanted to leave, all the more his subjects wanted him and him alone to be their lord:

यथा यथा दाशरथिर्धर्ममेवास्थितोऽभवत् ।
तथा तथा प्रकृतयो रामं पतिमकामयन् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa, 2, 45, 11

All the more pitiable is the attitude of the most aged and most learned Brāhmaṇas of Ayodhyā, who had reached the perfection of knowledge, performed great sacrifices, realised the Almighty as the immanent spirit of the universe, with their minds on that eternal Power of the universe, free from all desires, and the very embodiment of *dharma*, who nevertheless were drawn towards Rāma more than the most passionate householders hugging to the bonds of family life. By his great qualities, it almost looked as if Rāma drew them all unto himself. Their eyes filled with tears, their attitude one of despair, advanced in years, those Brāhmaṇas, diverse in their attainments, old in age and ripe in knowledge and dazzling in their lustre born of *tapasyā*, with their heads shaking because of their age, unable to keep pace with Rāma's chariot, even from a little distance, called on even the horses to show a proof of their high breed by turning back, stopping their course and cooperating in the best manner possible to help them to retain Rāma. Rāma feels so touched by their attitude that he at once jumps from the chariot, falls at their feet and continues his march on foot accompanied by Sītā and Lakshmaṇa. Rāma, being the highest in character and the noblest in compassion, would not continue his journey by chariot, but walks along as the sacred Brāh-

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maṇas were travelling on foot:

वाष्पेन पिहितं दीनं रामः सौमित्रिणा सह ।
चकर्षेव गुणैर्बद्धं जनं पुरनिवासिनम् ॥
ते द्विजास्त्रिविधा वृद्धा ज्ञानेन वयसौजसा ।
वयःप्रकम्पशिरसो दूरादूचुरिदं वचः ॥
वहन्तो जवना रामं भो भो जात्यास्तुरङ्गमाः ।
निवर्तध्वं न गन्तव्यं हिता भवत भर्तरि ॥
एवमार्तप्रलापांस्तान् वृद्धान्प्रलपतो द्विजान् ।
अवेक्ष्य सहसा रामो रथादवततार ह ॥
पद्भ्यामेव जगामाथ ससीतः सहलक्ष्मणः ।
द्विजातींस्तु पदातींस्तान् रामश्चारित्रवत्सलः ॥
न शशाक घृणाचक्षुः परिमोक्तुं रथेन सः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 45, 12-14, 17-19

These learned Brāhmaṇas address Rāma and tell him that the entire population of Brāhmaṇas of Ayodhyā was following him so dear to saintly ones. 'On our shoulders are the fires, *tretā*, *āhavanīya* and *dakshiṇa* that we are carrying and they are also following you. Look here! these are our umbrellas, white like the autumnal cloud, obtained on our completion of the *vājapeya* sacrifice. We cannot refrain from holding these to protect you from the fierce rays of the sun as you are without an umbrella to shelter you. Oh our child! our mind that ever follows the *mantras* of the *Vedas* is now set to follow you to the forest itself. The *Vedas* that are our only wealth are ever in our mind. We cannot bear your separation.

ब्रह्मण्यं कृत्स्नमेतत्त्वां ब्रह्मण्यमनुगच्छति ।
द्विजस्कन्धाधिरूढास्त्वामग्नयोऽप्यनुयान्त्यमी ॥
वाजपेयसमुत्थानि छत्राण्येतानि पश्य नः ।
पृष्ठतोऽनुप्रयातानि मेघानिव जलात्यये ॥
अनवाप्तातपत्रस्य रश्मिसंतापितस्य ते ।
एभिश्छायां करिष्यामः स्वैश्छत्रैर्वाजपेयकैः ॥
या हि नः सततं बुद्धिर्वेदमन्त्रानुसारिणी ।
त्वत्कृते सा कृता वत्स वनवासानुसारिणी ॥
हृदयेष्वेव तिष्ठन्ति वेदा ये नः परं धनम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 45, 21-25

This is a text of such importance, and has so touched the heart

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of Bhavabhūti, that he presents a prominent picture of it in his *Mahāvīracharita*. Yudhājit, the matenal uncle of Bharata, requested by Rāma not to follow him, replies, 'I am not the only one that follows you. All the people, young and old, high and low, are all after you (Fig 58). Do you not see this? These great and learned Brāhmaṇas of Ayodhyā, with their sacrificial ovens on their shoulders, and with their umbrellas obtained by the performance of the *vājapeya yajña*, are trying to reach you to shade you from the sun, followed by troops of their wives, also holding sacrificial ovens, with their cows that provide the *ājya* for *havana*, marching ahead of them, and it is indeed wonderful that even these Brhāmaṇas so old and feeble are running as it were to keep pace.

युधाजिम्—किमहमेकोऽनुगच्छामि । अपि तु सबालवृद्धाः प्रकृतयः । किं न पश्यसि ।
स्कन्धारोपितयज्ञपात्रनिचयाः स्वैर्वाजपयार्जितै-
श्छत्रैर्वारयितुं तवार्ककिरणानेते महाब्राह्मणाः ।
साकेताः सह सैनिकैरनुपतत्पत्नीगृहीताग्नयः
प्राक्प्रस्थापितहोमधेनव इमे धावन्ति वृद्धा अपि ।।

Mahāvīracharita 4

Vaśishṭha's remark to Kaikeyī is that even animals and birds, trees and creepers, would hasten to go ahead of him wherever he went, so highly valued was this beloved prince of sterling character,

द्रक्ष्यस्यद्यैव कैकेयि पशुव्तालमृगद्विजान् ।
गच्छतः सह रामेण पादपांश्च तदुन्मुखम् ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 37, 33

Jaṭāyu, the aged lord of eagles, has such a regard for the excellent qualities of Rāma that, hearing the wail of Sītā as she is carried away by Rāvaṇa, he stops the demon and, undaunted by his fierce appearance, challenges him to fight. Rāma, he says, is the ruler of the entire world, equal in might to Indra and Varuṇa, worthy son of Daśaratha, ever intent on promoting the welfare of the world, and Sītā is the reputed worthy spouse of one so great. And her, you are intent on carrying away. How can a king like you who should uphold righteousness be outrageous towards another's spouse? You dare not carry her away by force in my presence, and it shall not be so easy for you either, when I give you a battle. I am aged and unarmed, though you are youthful, panoplied, armed with bow and arrows and

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mounted on chariot. Yet it will not be an easy task for you to carry away the Vaideha princess:

राजा सर्वस्य लोकस्य महेन्द्रवरुणोपमः ।
लोकानां च हिते युक्तो रामो दशरथात्मजः ॥
तस्यैषा लोकनाथस्य धर्मपत्नी यशस्विनी ।
सीता नाम वरारोहा यां त्वं हर्तुमिहेच्छसि ॥
कथं राजा स्थितो धर्मे परदारान् परामृशेत् ।......
वृद्धोहं त्वं युवा धान्वी सशरः कवची रथी ।
तथाप्यादाय वैदेहीं कुशली न गमिष्यसि ॥
न शक्तस्त्वं बलाद्धर्तुं वैदेहीं मम पश्यतः ।

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 50, 4-6, 21-22

This threat of Jaṭāyu, aware of the reality of his age and infirmity but yet undaunted, as given by Vālmīki, is almost ignored and the noble bird is made a real hero in his spirited fight (Fig 59) given at length by Kumāradāsa. Like the *garuḍānila* or the fierce blast of the fluttering wings of Garuḍa, the powerful blasts of the wings of the lord of eagles, strong and swift, averted and scattered the weapons on Rāvaṇa, so as to be badly hurt by his own racing missiles:

अथ खगेश्वरपक्षसमीरणप्रबलवेगनिर्वर्तितपातितैः ।
अपि निजैरतिवेगिभिरायुधैर्दृढमहन्यत संयति रावणः ॥

Janakīharaṇa 11, 7

Rāma on his part admires the sacrificing spirit of a mere bird that gave up his life to save Sītā. 'Lakshmaṇa! says Rāma, this lord of birds gave up even the overlordship of the birds and sacrificed his life for my sake. So even among the lower order of beings, like animals and birds, there are the saintly ones, ethical in action, heroic, protective. I grieve not even for the loss of Sītā so much as the sad pass of this eagle in his effort to help me (Fig. 60) I have to honour him as my own father of great renown. I would cremate this lord of eagles placing him on the funeral pyre,

पश्य लक्ष्मण गृध्रोऽयमुपकारी हतश्च मे ।
सीतामभ्यवपन्नो वै रावणेन बलीयसा ॥
गृध्रराज्यं परित्यज्य पितृपैतामहं महत् ॥
मम हेतोरयं प्राणान्मुमोच पतगेश्वरः ॥

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सर्वत्र खलु दृश्यन्ते साधवो धर्मचारिणः ।
शूराः शरण्याः सौमित्रे तिर्यग्योनिगतेष्वपि ॥
सीताहरणजं दुःखं न मे सौम्य तथागतम् ।
यथा विनाशे गृध्रस्य मत्कृते च परन्तप ॥
राजा दशरथः श्रीमान्यथा मम महायशाः
पूजनीयश्च मान्यश्च तथायं पतगेश्वरः ।
सौमित्रे हर काष्ठानि निर्मथिष्यामि पावकम् ।
गृध्रराजं दिधक्षामि मत्कृते निधनं गतम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 68, 22-28

And now Rāma, in his highest and noblest emotional grandeur, rose to celestial heights, and by an asseveration raised the dead eagle to the highest heavenly abodes. Rāma exclaims 'Go Oh! lord of eagles! go to those the noblest of heavens, I vouchsafe for you, the heaven for the performers of the highest sacrifices with sacred fires lit, of the heroes that have braved the battle never to turn back, of those who gave away vast tracts as gifts, go to these Oh! great in might! your funeral rites are duly done by me!' And these Rāma did with offerings and utterance of sacred texts leading the forefathers to heaven, and repairing to the river Godāvarī, offered sacred ablutions of water for the lord of the eagles, in accordance with the enjoined mode of rites (Fig. 61):

या गतिर्यज्ञशीलानामाहिताग्नेश्च या गतिः ।
अपरावर्तिनां या च या च भूमिप्रदायिनाम् ॥
मया त्वं समनुज्ञातो गच्छ लोकाननुत्तमान् ।
गृध्रराज महासत्त्व संस्कृतश्च मया व्रज ॥
एवमुक्त्वा चितां दीप्तामारोप्य पतगेश्वरम् ।
ददाह रामो धर्मात्मा स्वबन्धुमिव दुःखितः ॥
······यत्तत्प्रेतस्य मर्त्यस्य कथयन्ति द्विजातयः ।
तत्स्वर्गगमनं तस्य पित्र्यं रामो जजाप ह ॥
ततो गोदावरीं गत्वा नदीं नरवरात्मजौ ।
उदकं चक्रतुर्स्तस्मै गृध्रराजाय तावुभौ ॥
शास्त्रदृष्टेन विधिना जलं गृध्राय राघवौ ।

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 68, 29-32, 34-36.

That Rāma and Lakshmaṇa lovingly performed the cremation and obsequies of so devoted a bird as Jaṭāyu that offered his own life to prevent Rāvaṇa carrying away Sītā is not so great a wonder as Rāma's

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magnanimity in doing the caemation (*dharma samskāra*) for the very demon that was attempting to gobble them up both, whom after cutting both his arms and rendering helpless, at his request, to enable him to cast of the demonaic form born of sage Sthūlaśinas' curse and to help resume his original divine form, he gathered faggots and helped by Lakshmaṇa lit the funeral fire (Fig. 62) :

एवमुक्तौ तु तौ वीरौ कबन्धेन नरेश्वरौ ।
गिरिप्रदरमासाद्य पावकं विससर्जतुः ।
लक्ष्मणस्तु महोल्काभिर्ज्वलिताभिः समन्ततः ।
चितामादीपयामास सा प्रजज्वाल सर्वतः ॥
ततश्चितताया वेगेन भास्वरो विमलाम्बरः ।
उत्पपातशु संहृष्टः सर्वप्रत्यङ्गभूषणः ॥
विमाने भास्वरे तिष्ठन् हंसयुक्ते यशस्करे ।
प्रभया च महातेजा दिशो दश विराजयन् ॥
सोऽन्तरिक्षगतो रामं कबन्धो वाक्यमब्रवीत् ।

Rāmāyaṇa 3, 72, 1-2, 5-6

Rāma truly is the beloved one of even his enemies as Garuḍa put it :

सखे राघव धर्मज्ञ रिपूणामपि वत्सल ।

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 5, 56

and no wonder he cremates even a demon his foe.

Guha's estimate of Rāma is that he is the immediate cause for the realisation of the highest *purushārthas*. By the grace of Rāma, I expect in this world the highest good in the form of fame and would obtain a vast treasure of *dharma* and unbounded *artha* and *kāma*. prosperity and love. Sumantra despairs that such continence as in Rāma could not bear fruit and is depressed by the calamity that had overtaken him. Yet, he feels that this very life in exile would as it were winRāma the highest heaven as the fruit of dharma. This is very much like what Lakshmaṇa feels and expresses in another context that though Rāma had served so assiduously *dharma* all his life had only a reward of suffering:

न मन्ये ब्रह्मचर्येऽस्ति स्वधीते वा फ़लोदयः ।
मार्दवार्जवयोर्वापि त्वां चेद्व्यसनमागतम्

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 52, 17

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When Śatrughna notices Mantharā in the palace moving about adorned in the golden ornaments provided her as reward for her churning Kaikey's mind against Rāma, he is so enraged at her very sight, that, in a moment of fury and mad with sorrow for all that had happened, of which she was the root cause, catches her by her braid and is about the severe her head, when Bharata stops him and tells him how inappropriate it would be to manhandle her. 'I would even kill this sinful Kaikeyī, who has acted so wickedly, if only it were not that Rāma would despise me as the murderer of a mother. If only he comes to know that this hunch-back has been killed by you, Rāma, who is the very embodiment of *dharma*, would certainly neither speak to you nor to me nor allow us even his presence:

हन्यामहमिमां पापां कैकेयीं दुष्टचारिणीम् ।
यदि मां धार्मिको रामो नासूयेन्मातृघातकम् ॥
इमामपि हतां कुब्जां यदि जानाति राघवः ।
त्वां च मां च हि धर्मात्मा नाभिभाषिष्यते ध्रुवम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 78, 22-23

Bharata describes Rāma to Vaśishṭha and compares him to Dilīpa and Nahusha and categorically tells him that he alone could run the kingdom:

ज्येष्ठः श्रेष्ठश्च धर्मात्मा दिलीपनहुषोपमः ।
लब्धुमर्हति कःकुत्स्थो राज्यं दशदथो यथा ॥

Rāmāyaṇa, 2, 32, 13

And in wonder Guha describes Rāma's attitude of *dharma* to Bharata. 'Whatever we brought for Rāma, he would not even touch, as he felt keenly that as a Kshatriya he could only give and never take. Thus having partaken of mere water brought by Lakshmaṇa, Rāma with Sītā spent a night of starvation:

रामस्याभ्यवहारार्थं बहु चोपहृतं मया ।
तत्सर्वं प्रत्यनुज्ञासीद्रामः सत्यपराक्रमः ॥
न तु तत्प्रत्यगृह्णात्स क्षत्रधर्ममनुस्मरन् ।
न ह्यस्माभिः प्रतिग्राह्यं सखे देयं तु सर्वदा ॥
इति तेन वयं राजन्ननुनीता महात्मना ।
लक्ष्मणेन समानीतं पीत्वा वारि महात्मना ॥
औपवास्यं तदाकार्षीद्राघवः सह सीतया ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 87, 14-17.

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That is why Guha observes that it is by great penance and the performance of difficult sacrifices that Daśaratha could obtain a son like Rāma like unto him in great qualities and so worthy:

महता तपसा लब्धो विविधैश्च परिश्रमैः ।
पको दशरथस्यैष पुत्रः सदृशलक्षणः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 2, 86, 12.

One of the noblest traits of Rāma is his anxiety to forget and forgive any hardship he may have experienced through any. When Daśaratha along with celestials appears before him after his victory in Laṅkā, when Sītā enters the fire, amazed at the spirit of his son born to him by celestial blessings and of whom he was so proud (Fig. 63 and64) Rāma requests him in all humility, not for any personal favour, but remembering an obscure incident in Ayodhyā how Daśaratha had disowned both Kaikeyī and Bharata, reminds him of it, and requests him to very kindly withdraw that terrible oath, by which he cut off both Kaikeyī and Bharata from himself, making it impossible for her to escape the greatest sin she had committed and rendering the offerings of Bharata to the father and forefathers ineffective, ushering on him a great sin in spite of the noble character that he bore:

इति ब्रुवाणं राजानं रामो प्रांजलिरब्रवीत् ।
कुरु प्रसादं धर्मज्ञ कैकेय्या भरतस्य च ॥
सपुत्रां त्वां त्यजामीति यदुक्ता कैकयी त्वया ।
स शापः कैकयीं घोरः सपुत्रां न स्पृशेत्प्रभो ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 122, 24-25.

Rāma's action was always a pointer to the pathway of *dharma* for all who would follow. That is why Hanumān appreciates Sītā's kindly attitude towards the rākshasīs. 'You are indeed the worthy wife of Rāma.

युक्ता रामस्य भवती धर्मपत्नी यशस्विनी ।

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 116, 46

Rāma is so aware of the sweet nature of Sītā and soft, kindly utterance in unison with her compassionate heart, that in his separation from her, he recalls her words dropping like nectar from her lips, pleasing to the ear, surpassing the taste of grapes, softer by far

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than butter and pregnent with meaning :

माधुर्यादधरितमृद्विकं म्रदिम्ना पाषाणीकृतनवनीतमर्थपुष्टम् ।
स्कन्नं तद्गलदमृतं वचोऽधरात्ते श्रोष्यामि श्रवणसुखं कदा नु कान्ते ॥

Sundararāmāyaṇa 9, 22

Bharadvāja, while expressing his joy and appreciating Rāma's victorious return from Laṅkā, still cannot but recall the difficult manner in which Rāma spent his life in the forest, with his mind intent on *dharma* alone and nothing else, wearing coarse bark garments, entering the darkness of the wood with a delicate woman in his group of three, abandoning a great empire, walking on foot, giving up entirely everything, totally discarding every kind of earthly enjoyment and intent only on fulfilling the word of his father, like a lustrous celestial fallen on the earth from heaven, when he could only excite his compassion and admiration:

त्वां पुरा चीरवसनं प्रविशन्तं महावनम् ।
स्त्रीतृतीयं च्युतं राज्याद्धर्मकामं च केवलम् ॥
पदातिं त्यक्तसर्वस्वं पितुर्वचनकारिणम् ।
सर्वभोगैः परित्यक्तं स्वर्गच्युतमिवामरम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 127, 5-6.

It does not stop only with this. Rāma was accompanied by a woman, his wife, who formed the third in the company, *strītrītiyam chyutam rājyāt dharmakāmam*, as Bharadvaja puts it, unmindful of the empire he had renounced, which was rightfully his, only for the sake of the values rooted in *dharma* that he loved so well. It is even so that Sītā, whose feet could purify Bharata's locks as they her feet, both so holy, fully conscious of the innocence and goodness of Sītā, was abandoned by Rāma, but only after suggestively proclaiming to the world his complete confidence in her immaculate character, by making Lakshmaṇa, a witness of the wonder of *agnipraveśa* of Sītā, *adbhutair upayaiḥ* as Bhavabhūti discribes it, leave her in the forest near Valmīki's penance grove, and even more, by having an image of Sītā placed beside him, as the presnce of the consort was essential to perform the Aśvamedha he undertook to expiate the sin of slaying Rāvaṇa, a Brahmarākshasa well read in the *Vedas*. Kālidāsa puts it most effectively when he says that Sītā could endure the unbreable

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grief of seperation from Rāma only because she could have the mind of Rāma so devoted to her revealed in the news she could gather that having abandoned her, and could perform sacrifices only with a wife beside him, would never take a wife again, Sītā being his one and only beloved in whom he had full confidence, and could only have her image placed beside him for satisfying the need of sacrificial ritual :

सीतां हित्वा दशमुखरिपुर्नोपयेमे यदन्यां
तस्या एव प्रतिकृतिसखो यत्क्रतूनाजहार ।
वृत्तान्तेन श्रवणविषयप्रापिना तेन भर्तुः
सा दुर्वारं कथमपि परित्यागदुःखं सिषेवे ॥

Raghuvamśa 14, 87.

That is why the remark of Kālidāsa that Rāma burst into tears like the moon of the Pausha month shedding dew. After all it was only to avoid calumny and any evil in the realm with an ill-understood incident as an excuse for it in a land that he was to rule justly by setting an example that he sent her out of his abode, but from his heart, where she had an eternal adored place, he never did abandon her :

बभूव रामः सहसा सबाष्पस्तुषारवर्षीव सहस्यचन्द्रः ।
कौलीनभीतेन गृहान्निरस्ता न तेन वैदेहसुता मनस्तः ॥

Raghuvamśa 14, 84

For Kālidāsa, to compare Bharata's head, covered with *jaṭās*, come in contact with the lotus feet of Sītā, as he bowed to her on Rāma's return from Laṅkā, by remarking that mutually one purified the other, as the feet were distinguished by their spurning the advances of Rāvaṇaand ths matted locks by their close simulation in ascctic glory Rāma's own were equally distinguished:

लंकेश्वरप्रणतिभङ्गदृढव्रतं तत्पादारविन्दयुगलं जनकात्मजायाः ।
ज्येष्ठानुरोधजटिलं च शिरोऽस्य साधोरन्यौन्यपावनमभूदुभयं समेत्य ॥

Raghuvamśa 13, 78

Rāma indeed was an example in *dharma* for all and equally also for Bharata. He was not only wearing ascetic locks like Rāma but was also a *dharmātmā*, the very picture of *dharma*. That is why Vālmīki describes Bharata as a delicately nurtured prince in coarse

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bark garments and antelope skin covering, so devoted to *dharma* that even his citizens would not deign to enjoy anything that Bharata himself had given up, Bharata, who knew *dharma* so well and looked the very embodiment of *dharma*:

न हि ते राजपुत्रं तं चीरकृष्णाजिनाम्बरम् ।
परिभोक्तुं व्यवस्यन्ति पौरा वै धर्मवत्सलम् ।।
तं धर्ममिव धर्मज्ञं देहवन्तमिवापरम् ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 126, 33.

As Rāma set an example for everyone in the attitude to be pursued towards *dharma*, the people in his kingdom individually followed the example set. They were joyous because they trod the right path. Everyone was happy. Everyone was attuned to *dharma.* Observing the conduct of Rāma, they could never mutually in the least act to the detriment of any. Everywhere everyone spoke in terms of Rāma and Rāma alone, the name of Rāma pronounced over and over again in every context. When Rāma ruled the earth the entire expanse of his empire was, at it were, ringing with the name of Rāma:

सर्वं मुदितमेवासीत्सर्वो धर्मपरोऽभवत् ।
राममेवानुपश्यन्तो नाभ्यहिंस्यन् परस्परम् ।।......
रामो रामो राम इति प्रजानामभवन् कथाः ।
रामभूतं जगदभूद्रामे राज्यं प्रशासति ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 131, 100, 102.

The people naturally prayed that Rāma should live long and rule the empire following the code of *dharma* as he did:

ईदृशो नश्चिरं राजा भवेदिति नरेश्वर ।
कथयन्ति पुरे राजन् पौरा जानपदास्तथा ।।

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 41, 21-22.

It is no wonder that Rāma could even call the attention of his ministers to any error of judgement and appreciate even a dog that could speak out the path of *dharma*:

न यूयं नीतितत्त्वज्ञाः श्वा वै जानाति कारणम् ।

Rāmāyaṇa 7, 21, 4.

It is no wonder therefore that Kshemendra puts it in the mouth

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of the ṛishis their appreciation of Rāma's devotion to *dharma* and his threefold manifestation in this regard. The ṛishis on a visit to Rāma in Ayodhyā when he ruled the earth exclaim in joy: 'Your bow is to protect the three worlds. Your vast treasury is for the proper performance of sacrifice. Your very existence and life is for setting an example to even saintly men by your own example. How wonderfully praiseworthy are these three in you?

धनुस्त्रैलोक्यरक्षार्थं यज्ञार्थमखिलं धनम् ।
जीवितं साधुवादार्थंमहो श्लाघ्यं तव त्रयम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇamañjarī 8, 14.

It is indeed interesting that Vālmīki is echoed by Kumāradāsa who pictures Rāma unflinching, like the tremorless earth protecting the entire expanse with that supreme compassion that considered the welfare of others as his own prosperity,

रामोऽरक्षत्कृतपरहितस्वोदयायां दयायां स्थित्वा पृथ्वीमविचलतया तत्समस्तां समस्ताम् ।

Jānakīharaṇa 20, 60.

It is no wonder then that when Lakshmaṇa pronounced the oath that if Rāma was a true *dharmātmā*, the arrow should hit the unassailable son of Ravaṇa, Indrajit, and instantly kill him, it did so:

धर्मात्मा सत्यसन्धश्च रामो दाशरथिर्यदि ।
पौरुषेचाप्रतिद्वन्द्वः शरैनं जहि रावणिम् ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 6, 91, 73

It is no wonder again that Viśvāmitra could assure Daśaratha that he himself, Vaśishṭha and the other sages in deep penance that had realised the highest Truth, knew the real nature of Rāma as a *mahātmā* and *satyaparākrama*:

अहं वेद्मि महात्मानं रामं सत्यपराक्रमम् ।
वशिष्ठोपि महातेजा ये चेमे तपसि स्थिताः ॥

Rāmāyaṇa 1, 19, 14-15.

In the *Dhyānaśloka*, at the commencement of the study of the *Rāmāyaṇa* everyday, Rāma is pictured as seated under the *kalpa* tree in *virāsana* accompanied by Sītā, Lakshmaṇa and other brothers,

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Vibhīśhaṇa, Sugrīva, Aṅgada, Jāmbavān and others with his hand in *chinmudrā*, expounding the highest *dharma* and philosophy, as Hanumān reads out the text in front of him and expounding it to the highest and noblest of sages like Vaśishṭha, Vāmadeva, Agastya and the others whom he revered but even whom he could enlighten in the nuances of the highest *dharma*

वैदेहीसहितं सुरद्रुमतले हैमे महामण्डपे
मध्ये पुष्पकमासने मणिमये वीरासने सुस्थितन् ।
अग्रे वाचयति प्रभुञ्जनसुते तत्त्वं मुनिभ्यः रुरं
ध्याख्यान्तं भरतादिभिः परिवृतं रामं भजे श्यामलम् ॥

There are paintings and sculptures illustrating this aspect of Rama from the Himālaya to Cape Camorin (Fig 65 and 66).

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is the epic given by Vālmīki. The compassionate sage, whose grief at the death of the *Krauncha* bird at the hands of a cruel hunter who shot one of a loving pair spurt into poetry (Fig. 67):,

तामभ्यगच्छद्रुदितानुसारी कविः कुशेध्माहरणाय यातः ।
निषादविद्धाण्डजदर्शनोत्थः श्लोकत्वमापद्यत यस्य शोकः ॥

Raghuvamśa 14, 70

and enabled him to create a poetic panacea for all the ills of the world, to alleviate human misery by indicating the ethical way of like. It is this that has built up the character of every Indian from his childhood by constant rumination on his noble qualities and developing of an emulative spirit to follow his example:

रामो रामो राम इति तत्र संजज्ञिरे कथाः ।

is not merely during the rule of Rāma

रामे राज्यं प्रशासति ।

but it is a mental picture of his noble traits that have in proper focus remained ever before the gaze of one and all in a country that could have produced such a paragon of virtue (Fig 68 and 69).

धर्मो विग्रहवान् रामः ।

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Fig. 1. Terracotta seal with legend *dharmo rakshati rakshitaḥ*, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Basarh.

Fig. 2. Inscription of Heliodoros on Garuḍa column, C. 200 B.C., Besnagar.

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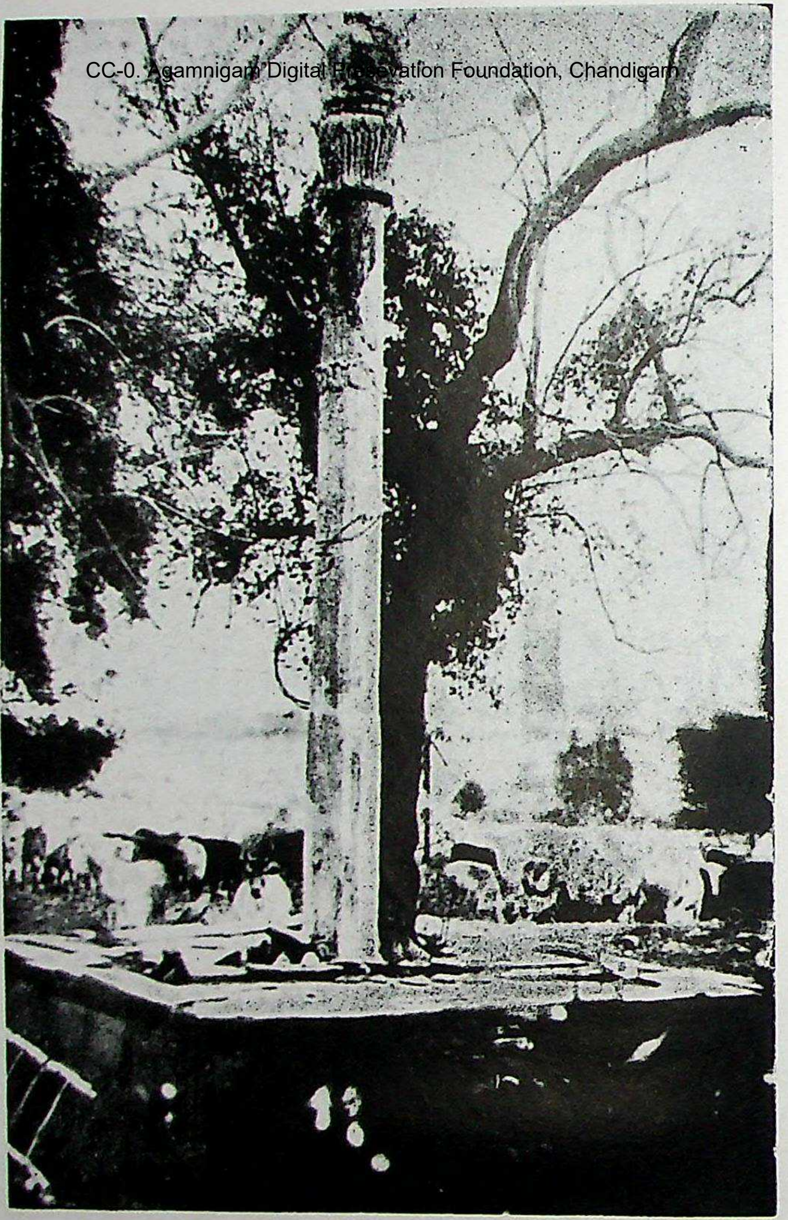

Fig. 3. Garuḍa column of Heliodoros, C. 200 B.C., Besnagar.

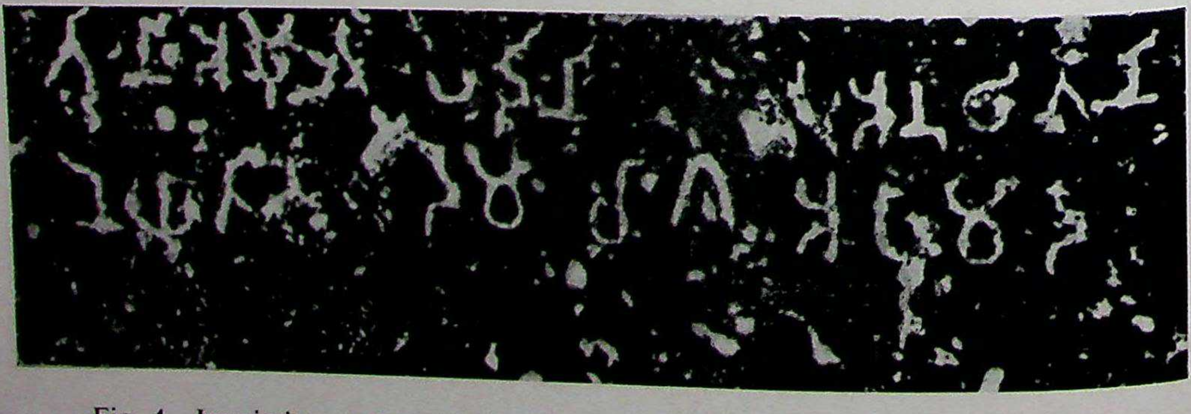

Fig. 4. Inscription on the column giving the three ambrosial words *dama, tyāga* and *apramāda.*

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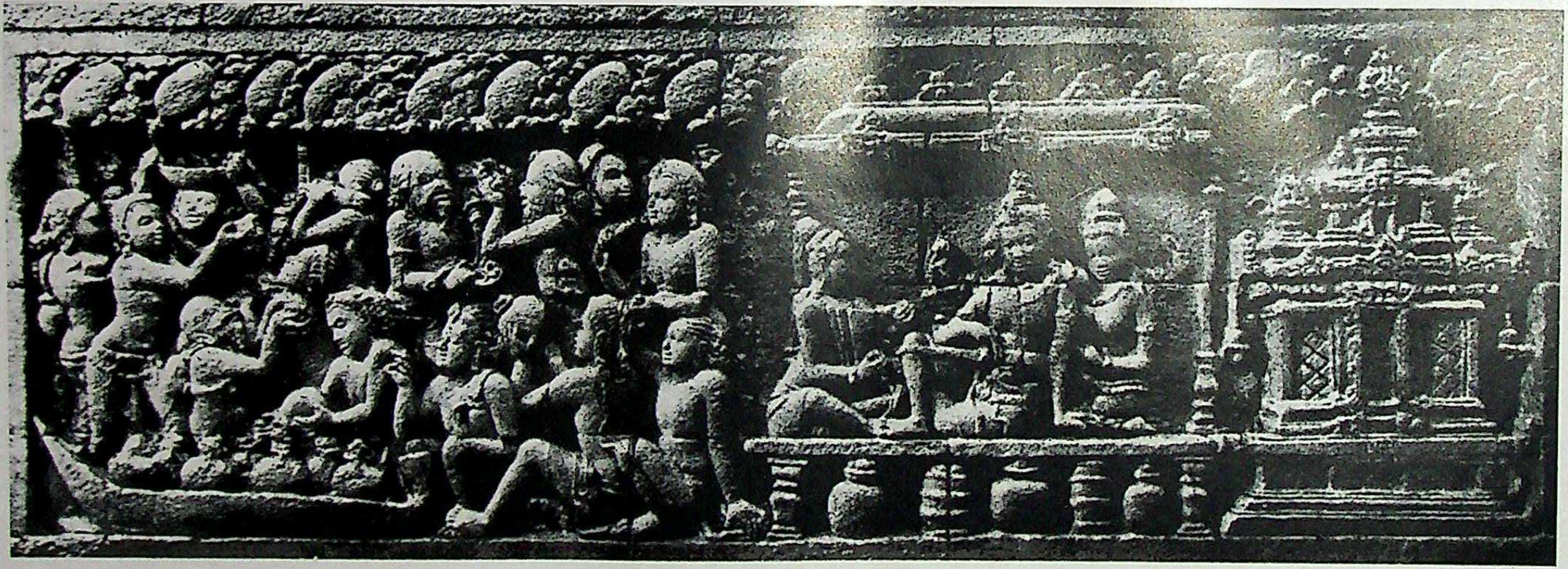

Fig. 5. Shower of gold from heaven to reward the righteous king, Śailendra, 8th century A.D., Stupa, Barabudur, Indonesia.

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Fig. 6. The charm in Rāma's face, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Vaḍakkupaṇayur, Government Museum, Madras.

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Fig. 7. Rāma counselling *abhaya* for Vibhīshaṇa, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Nāgeśvaraswāmi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

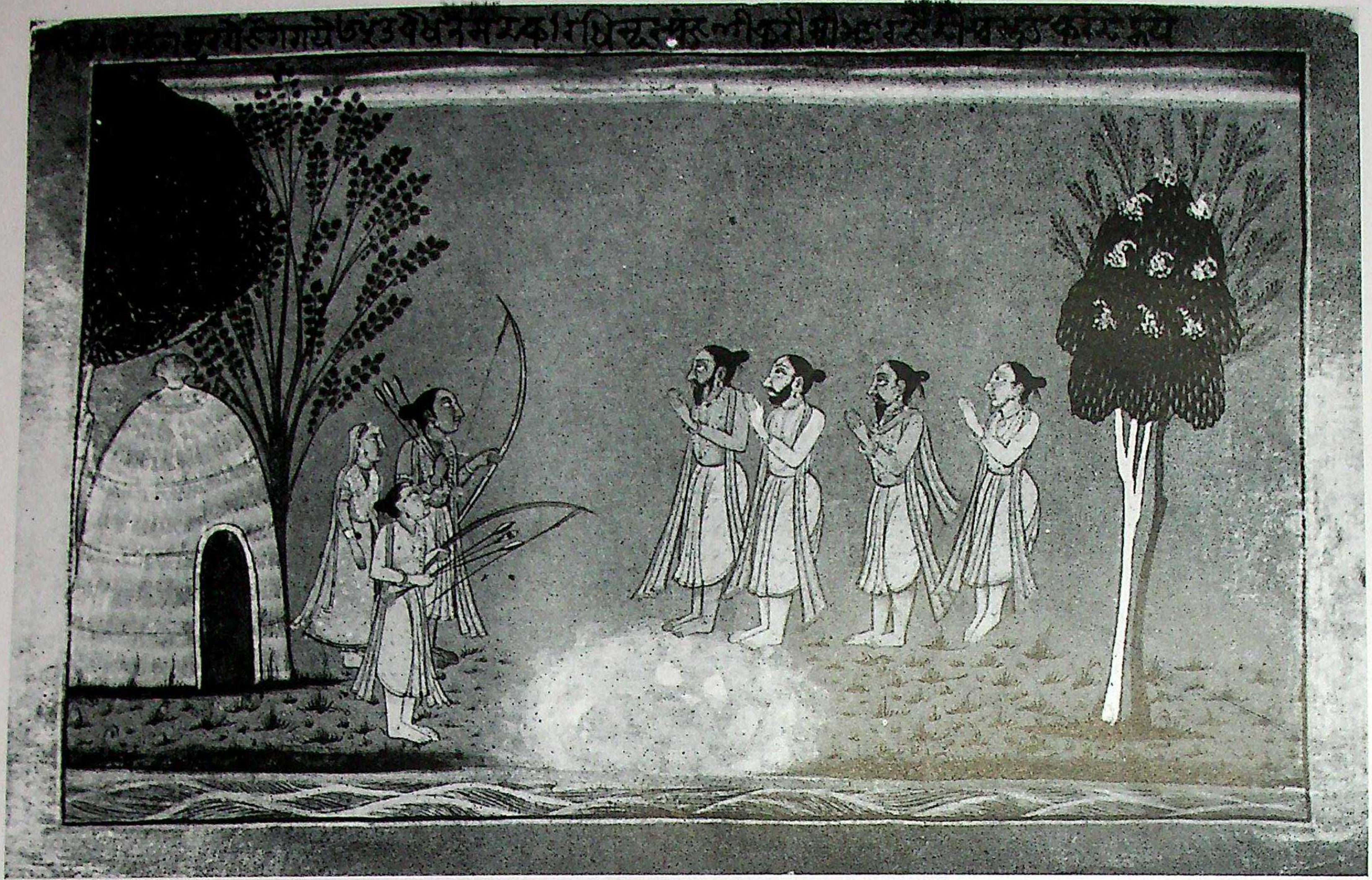

Fig. 8. Rāma, Lakshmaṇa and Sītā, met by sages in the Daṇḍakā forest, assuring them protection from the *rākshasas*, Basohli school, 18th century A.D., National Museum.

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Fig. 9. Rāma killing the *rākshasas* in the Daṇḍakā forest to protect the sages, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva Temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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Fig. 10. Hanumān, embodiment of wisdom and humility, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Vaḍakkupaṇayur, Government Museum, Madras.

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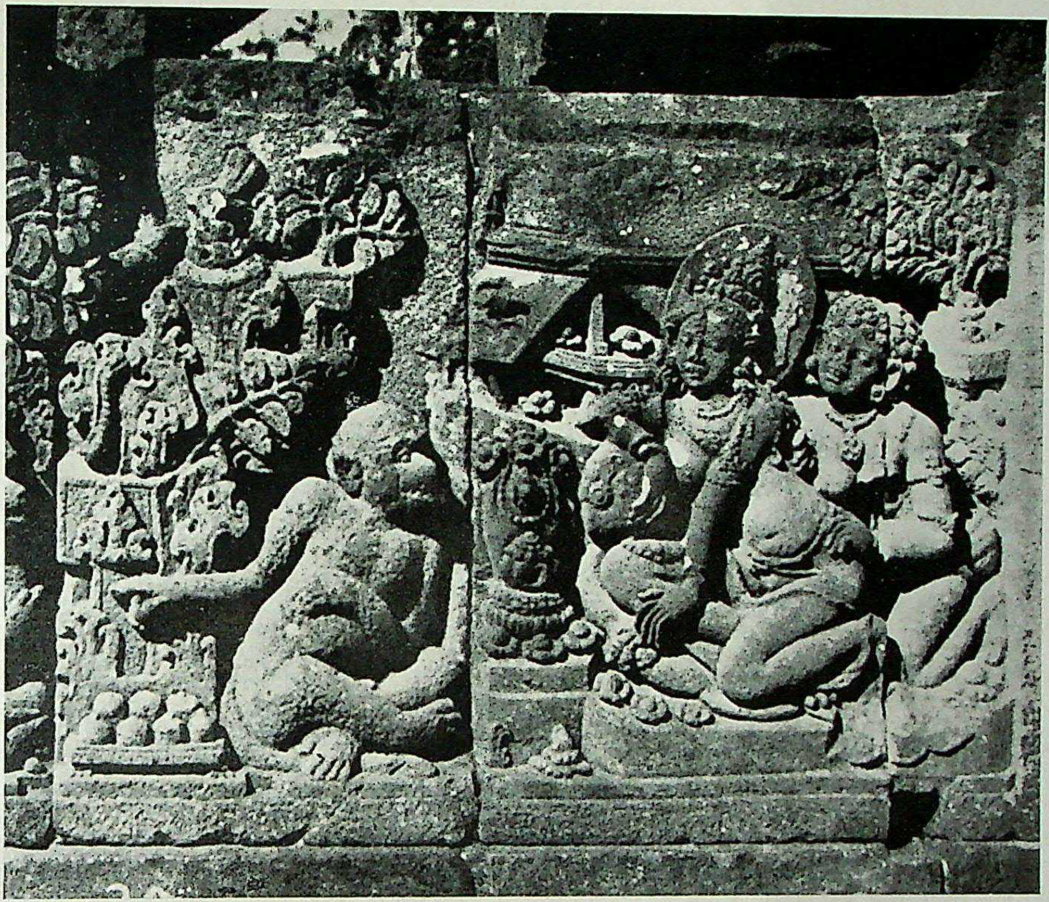

Fig. 11. Hanumān and Sītā in conversation in Aśokavana, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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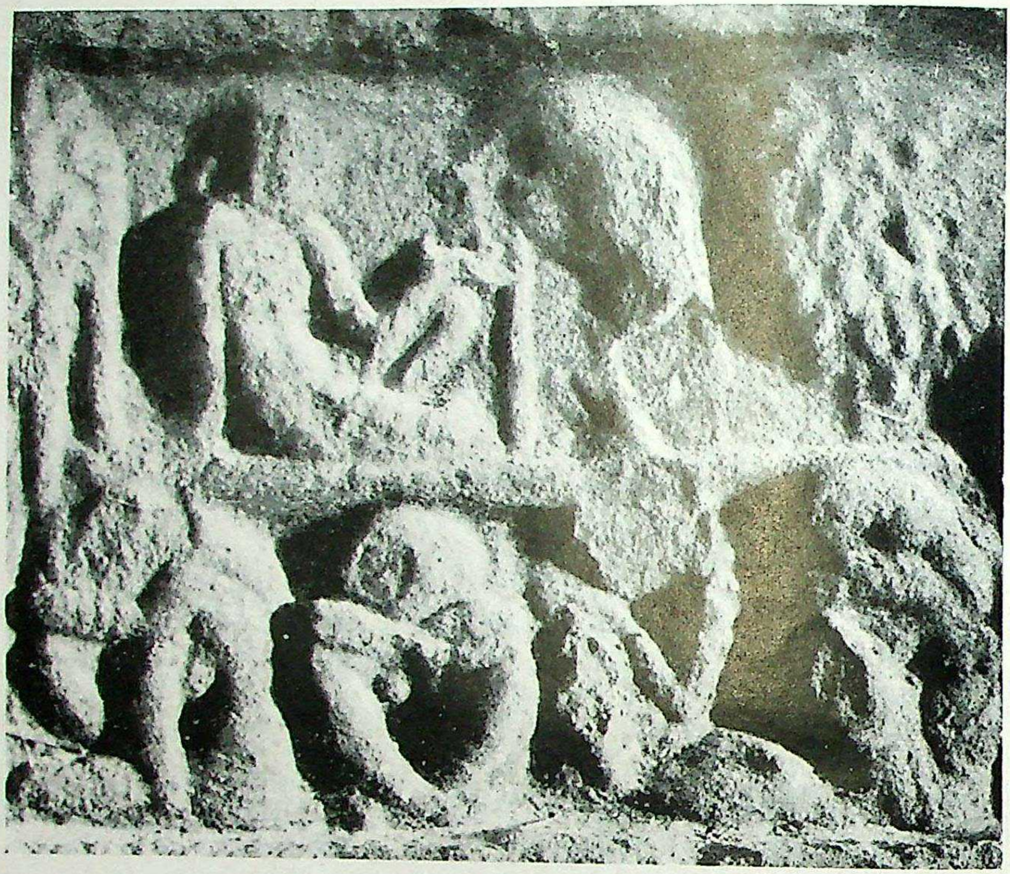

Fig. 12. Sītā and Hanumān in conversation in Aśokavana, 10th century A.D., Choḷa, Nāgeśvaraswāmi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

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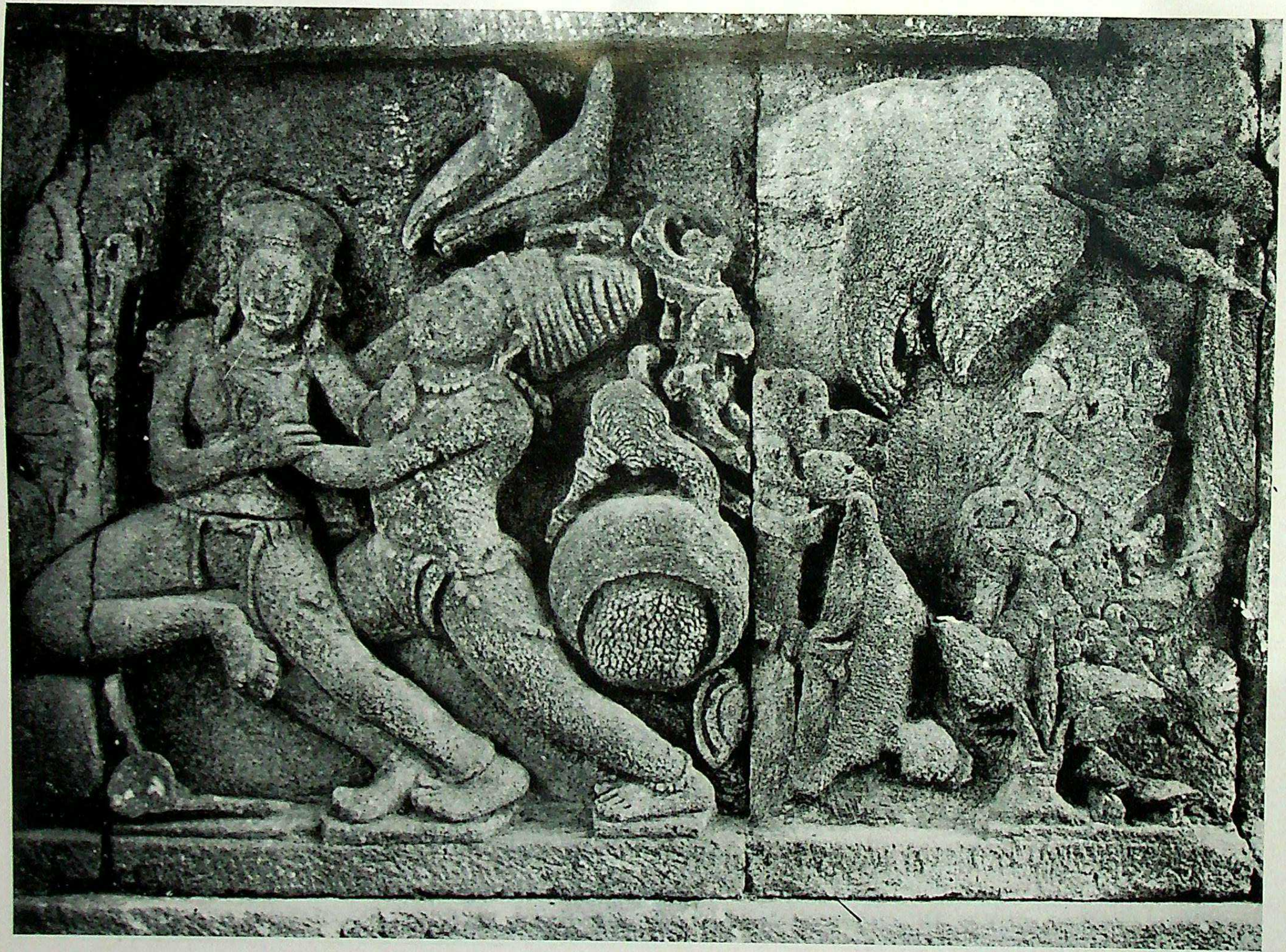

Fig. 13. Helpless Sītā abducted by Rāvaṇa, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

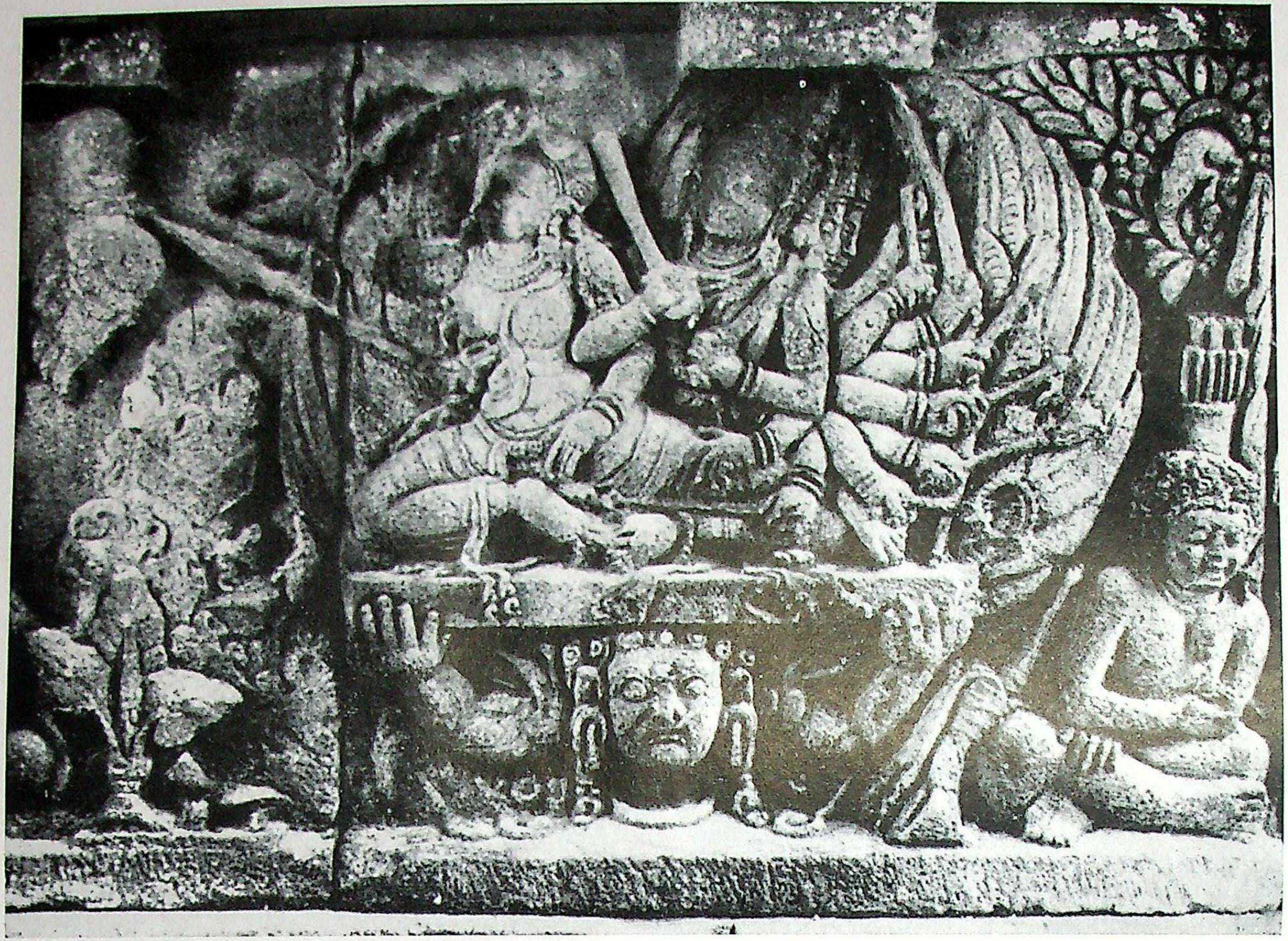

Fig. 14. Helpless Sītā abducted by Rāvaṇa in his Pushpaka, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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Fig. 15. Sītā surrounded and threatened by *rākshasīs* in Aśokavana, Basohli school, 18th century A.D., National Museum.

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Fig. 16. Śūrpaṇakhā punished, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Deogarh, National Museum.

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Fig. 17. Śūrpaṇakhā's wail before Khara and Dūshaṇa, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Nāgeśvaraswāmi Temple, Kumbakoṇam.

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Fig. 18. Śūrpaṇakhā's wail before Rāvaṇa, early Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Pāpanātha temple, Paṭṭaḍakal.

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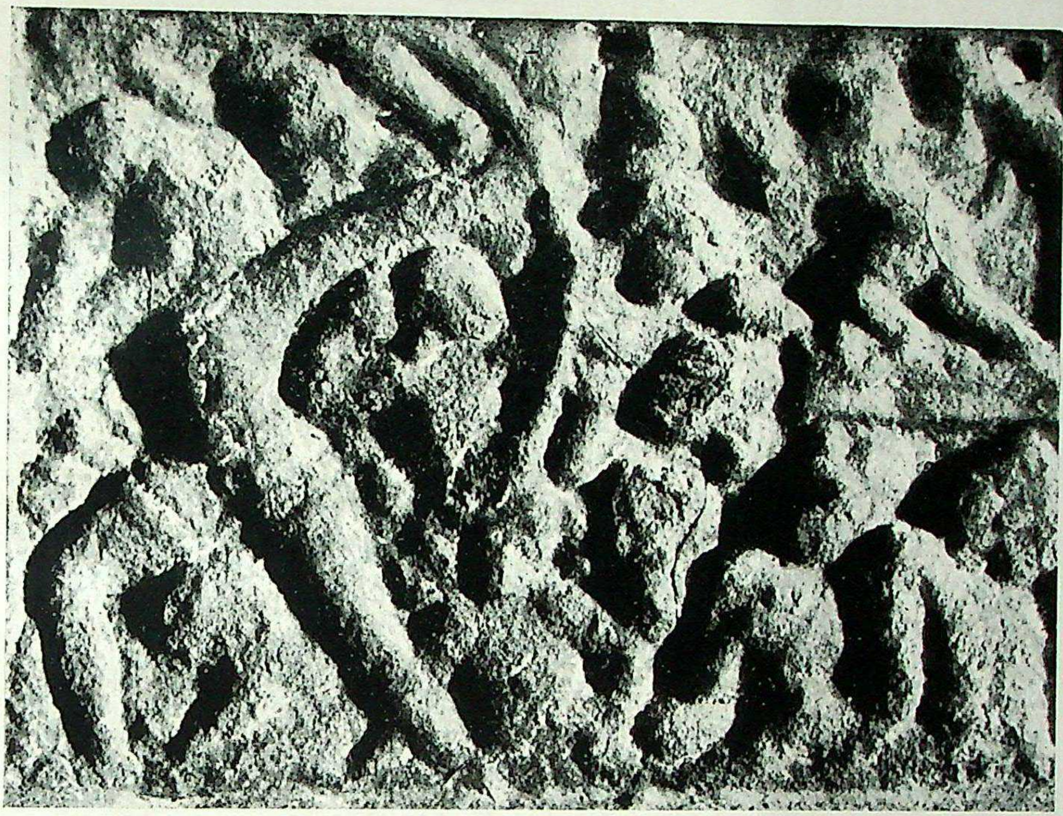

Fig. 19. Rāma fighting the hosts of Khara and Dūshaṇa, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Nāgeśvaraswāmi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

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Fig. 20. Daśaratha with his queens fondling his four children, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Nāgeśvaraswāmi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

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Fig. 21. Rāma, the most lovable prince of all, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Vaḍakkupaṇayur, Government Museum, Madras.

Fig. 22. Vishṇu assuring *devas* of his birth as Rāma, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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Fig. 23. Birth of Rāma, Vardhana, 7th century A.D., Gwalior Museum.

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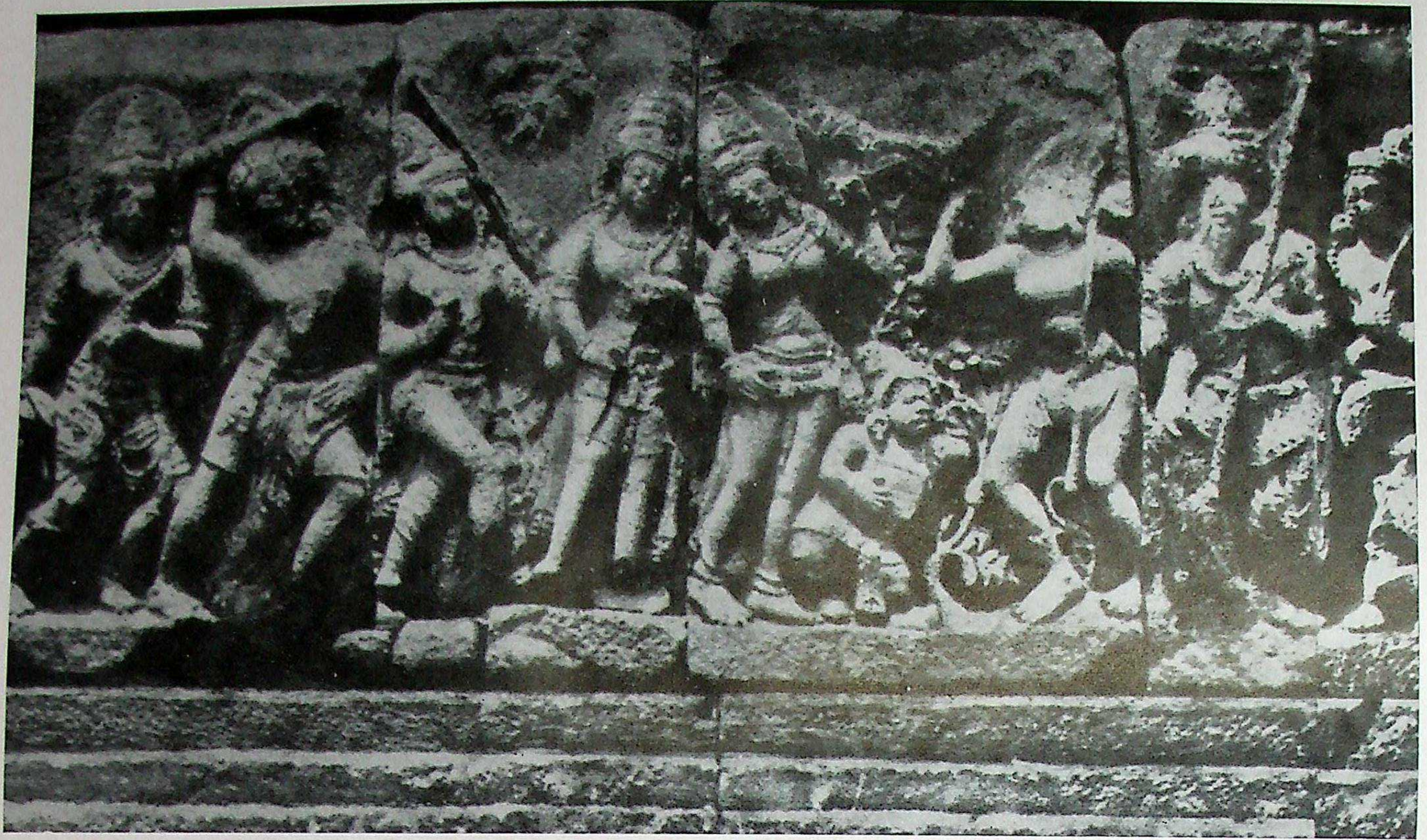

Fig. 24. Paraśurāma meets and challenges Rāma, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

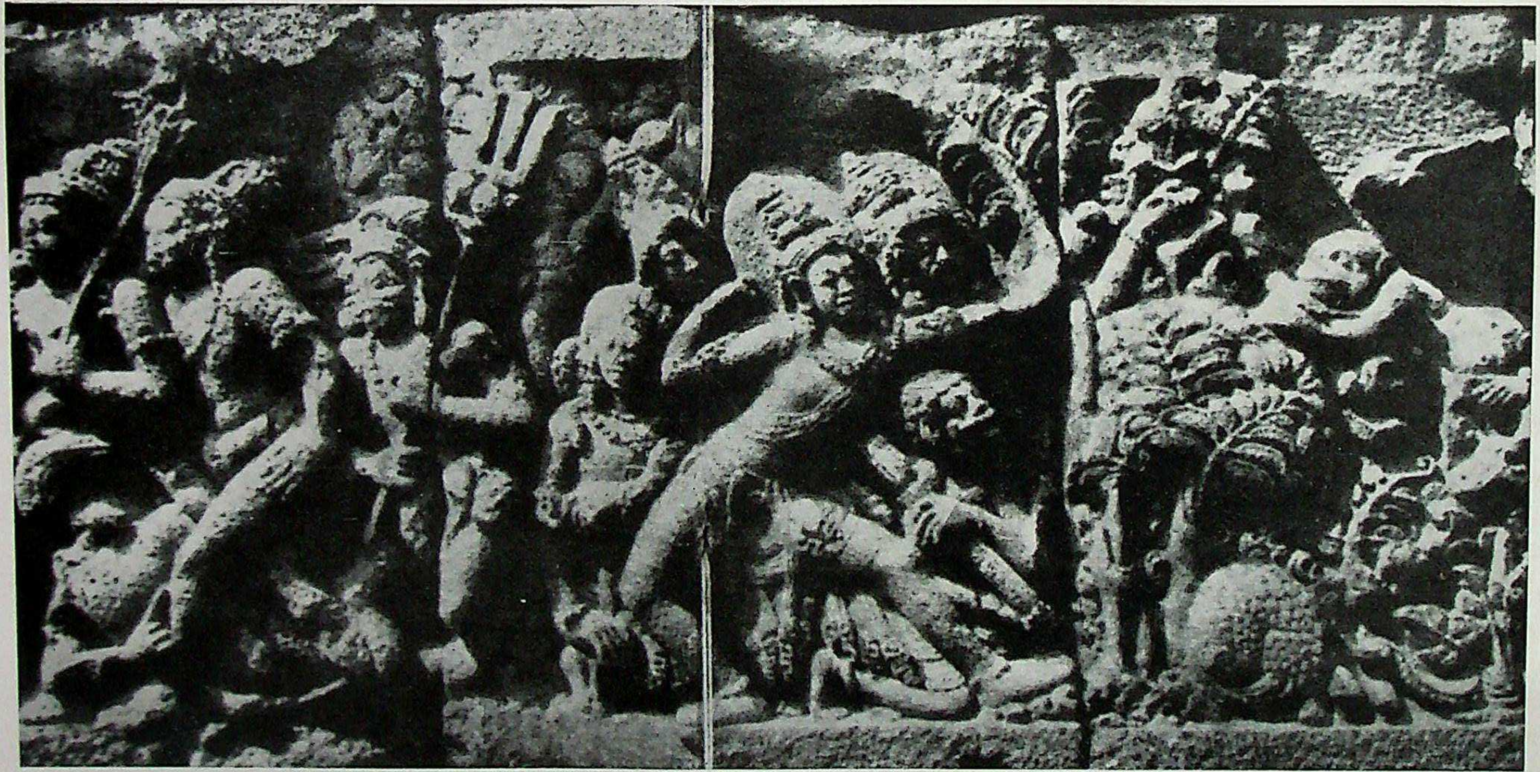

Fig. 25. Rāma strings the bow of Paraśurāma and overcomes him, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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Fig. 26. Rāma kills Tāḍakā, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Nāgeśvaraswāmi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

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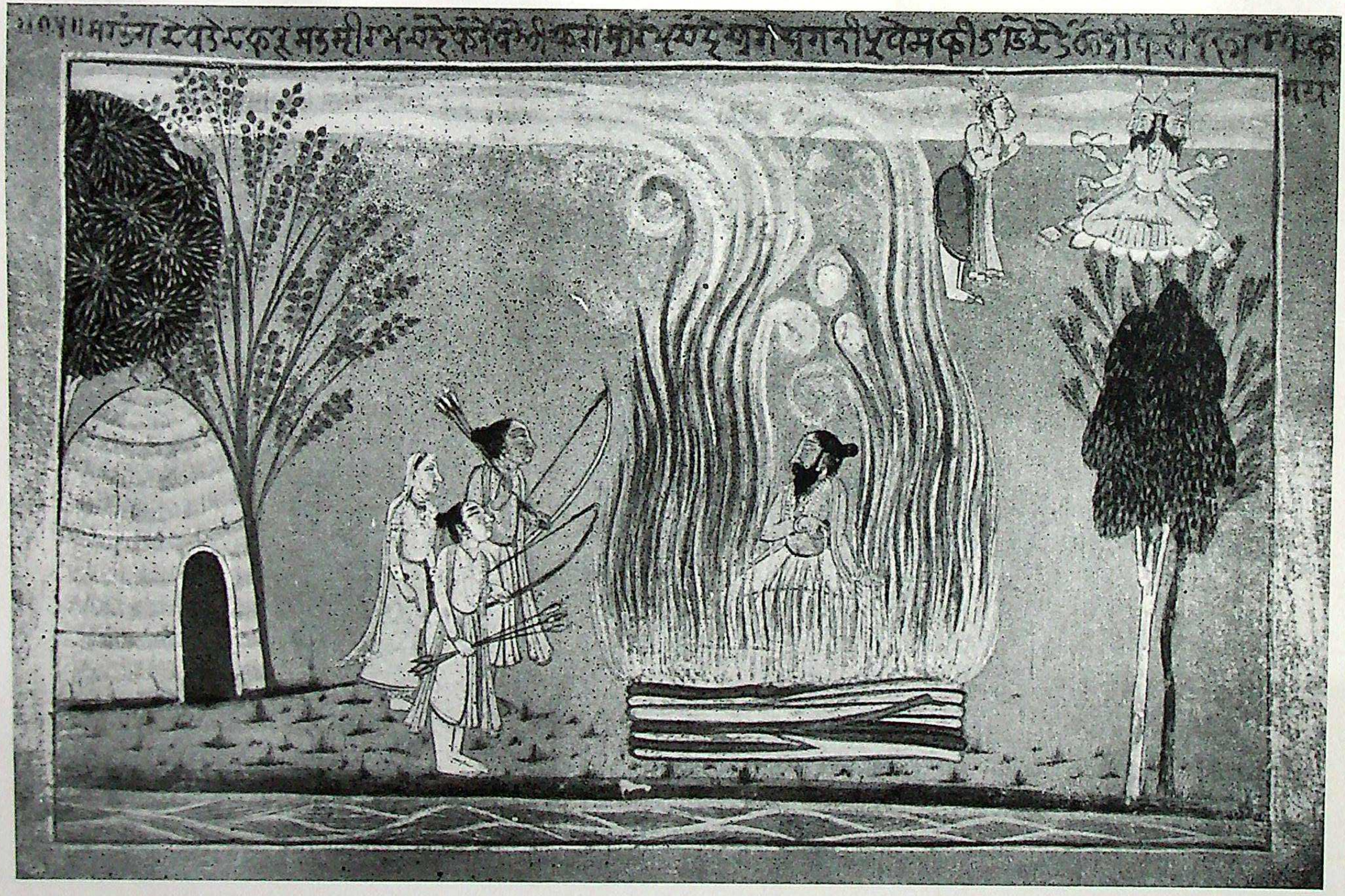

Fig. 27. Rāma watches Śarabhaṅga, consuming himself in fire, Basohli school, 18th century A.D., National Museum.

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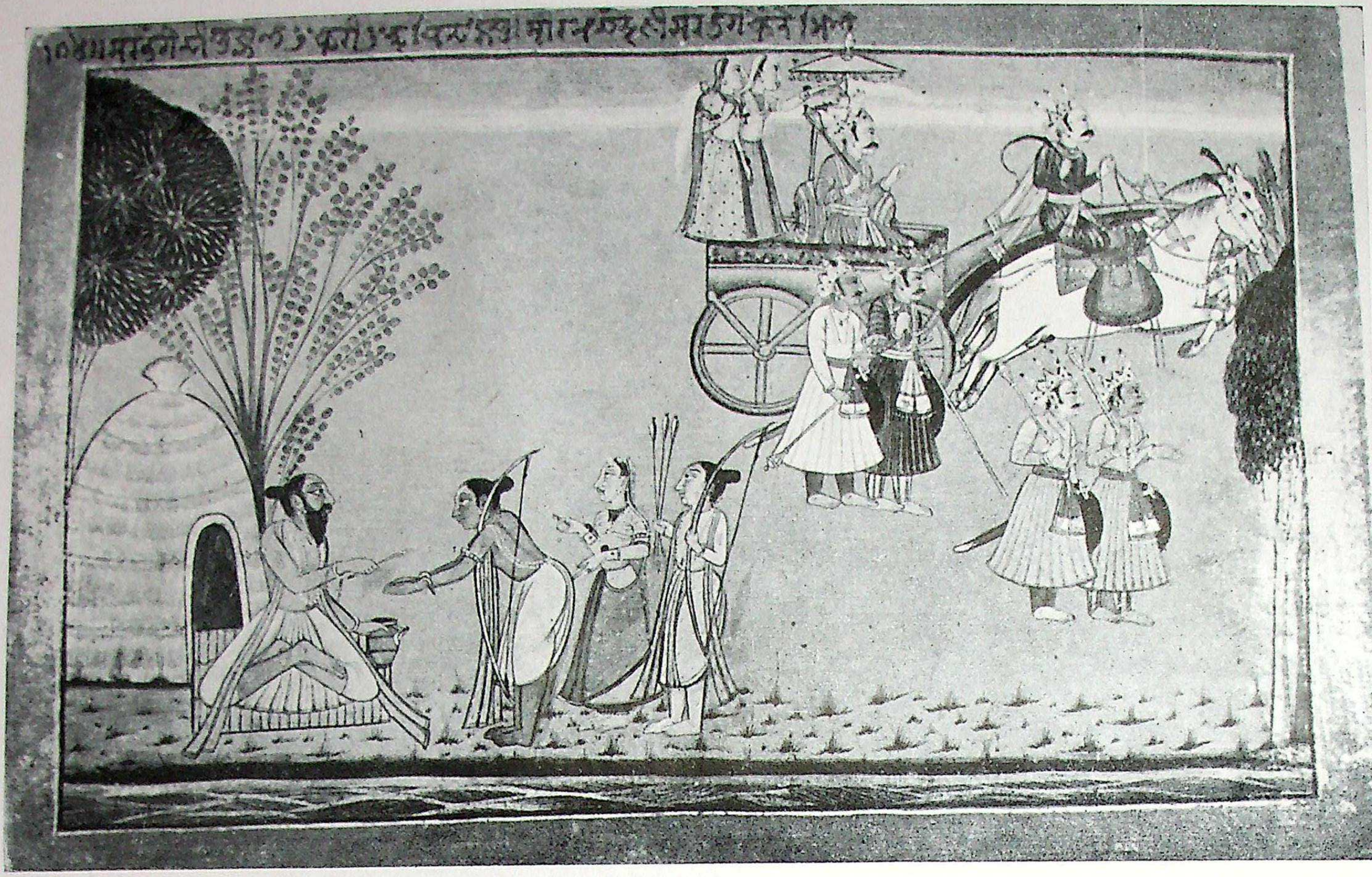

Fig. 28. Rāma meets Sutīkshṇa, Basohli school, 18th century A.D., National Museum.

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Fig. 29. Sītā and Rāma, Sītā beloved of Rāmā, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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Fig. 30. Sītā, beautiful and good, beloved of Rāma, for whom he got even the golden deer, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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Fig. 31. Sītā and Anasūyā in sage Atri's hermitage, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Deogarh.

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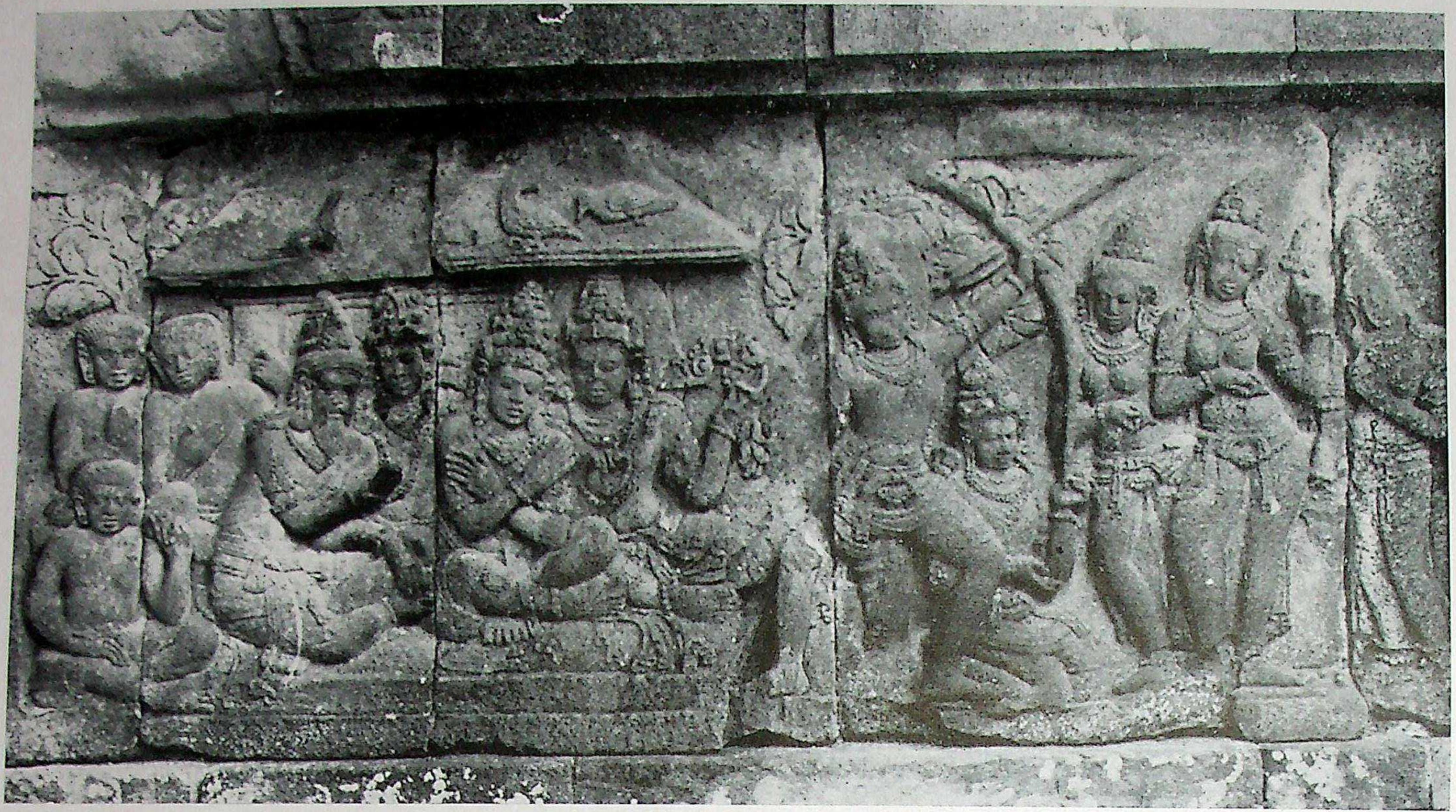

Fig. 32. Rāma strings the impossible bow of Janaka and wins Sītā, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva Temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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Fig. 33. Marriage of Rāma and Sītā, his brothers and her sisters, Mālwa, 17th century A.D., National Museum.

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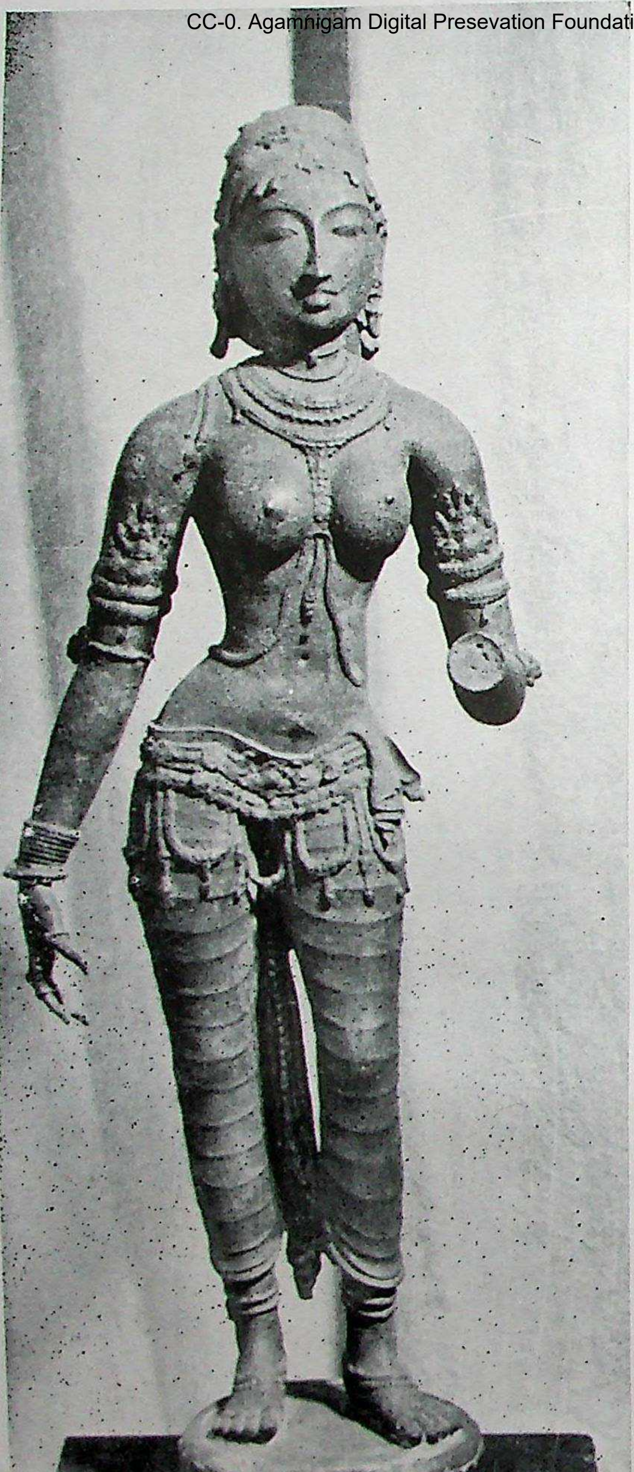

Fig. 35. Sītā celestial in charm, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Vaḍakkupaṇayur, Government Museum, Madras.

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Fig. 36. Sītā celestial in charm, close up of Fig. 30.

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Fig. 37. Rāma enquires of trees and *Vanadevatās* about Sītā, Basohli school, 18th century A.D., National Museum.

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Fig. 38. Rāma and Lakshmaṇa in search of Sītā, early Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Virūpāksha temple, Paṭṭaḍakal.

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Fig. 39. Sītā enters the flames and is brought unscathed, Mālwa, 17th century, A.D., National Museum.

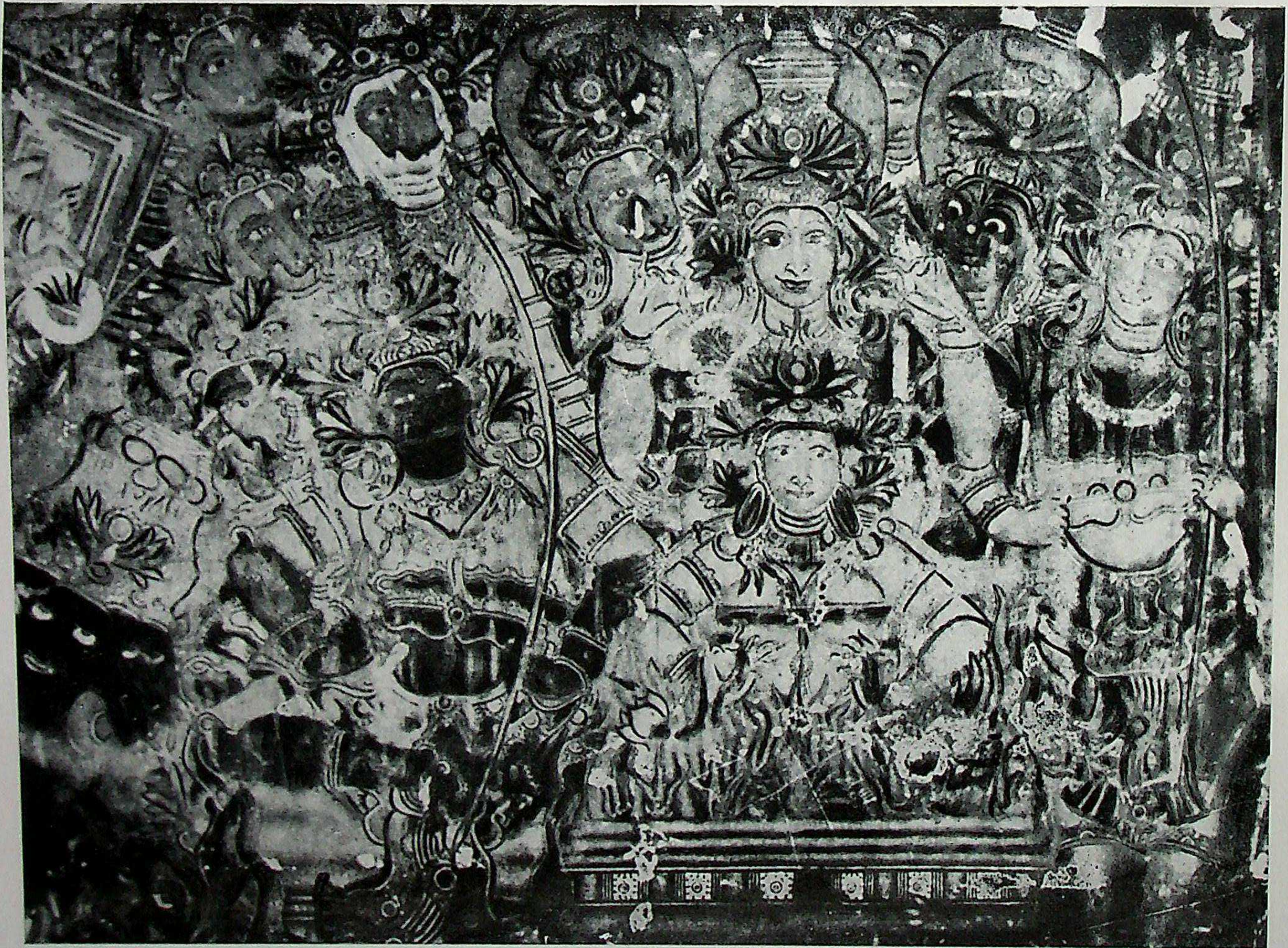

Fig. 40. Sītā enters the flames and is brought unscathed, late Chera, 18th century A.D., mural, Maṭṭāñcheri Palace.

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Fig. 41. Building the bridge on the ocean, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Bhārat Kalā Bhavan Museum, Vārāṇasī.

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Fig. 42. Rāvaṇa offers a garland of his cut heads to Śiva, Rāshṭrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Kailāsa temple, Ellora.

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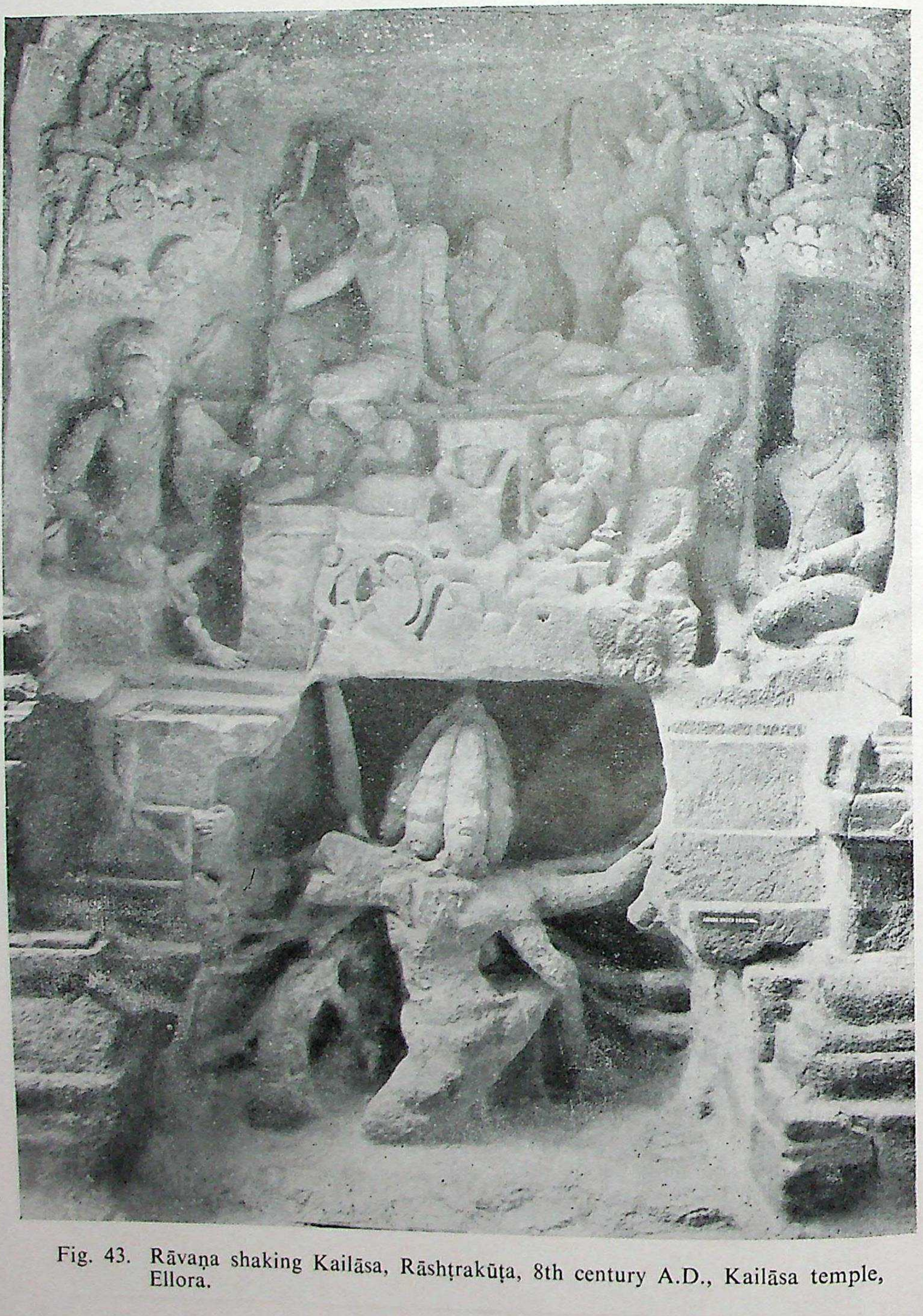

Fig. 43. Rāvaṇa shaking Kailāsa, Rāshṭrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Kailāsa temple, Ellora.

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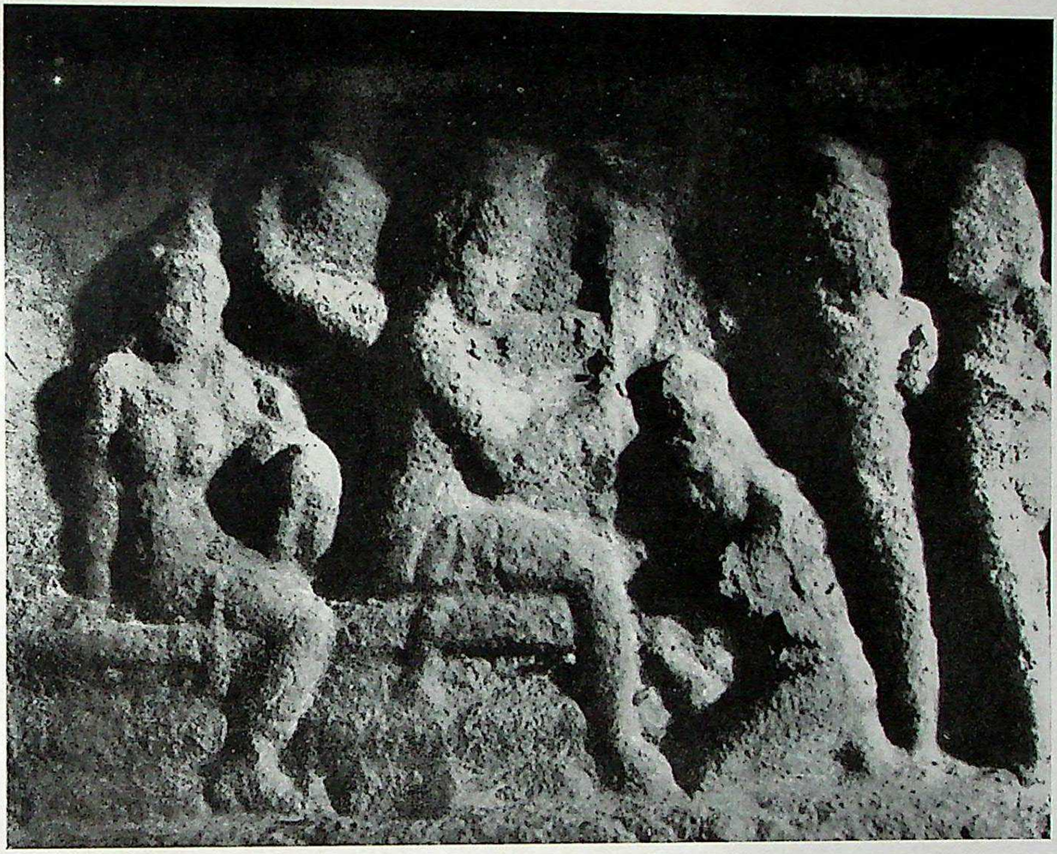

Fig. 44. Bharata meets Rāma, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Nāgeśvaraswāmi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

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Fig. 45. Bharata meets Rāma, Mālwa school, 17th century A.D., National Museum.

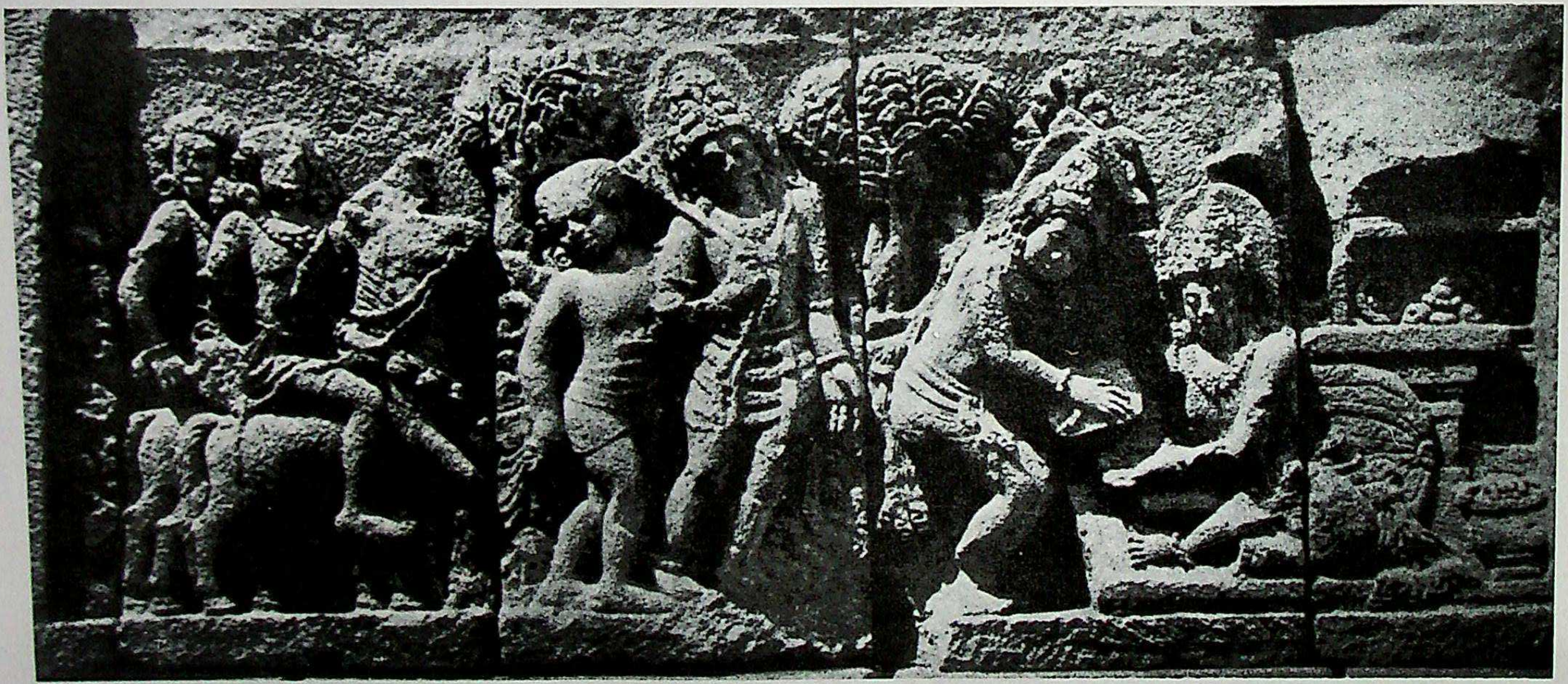

Fig. 46. Bharata receiving the *pādukās* of Rāma, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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Fig. 47. Bharata holding the *pādukās* of Rāma on his head, Vijayanagara, 16th century A.D., National Museum.

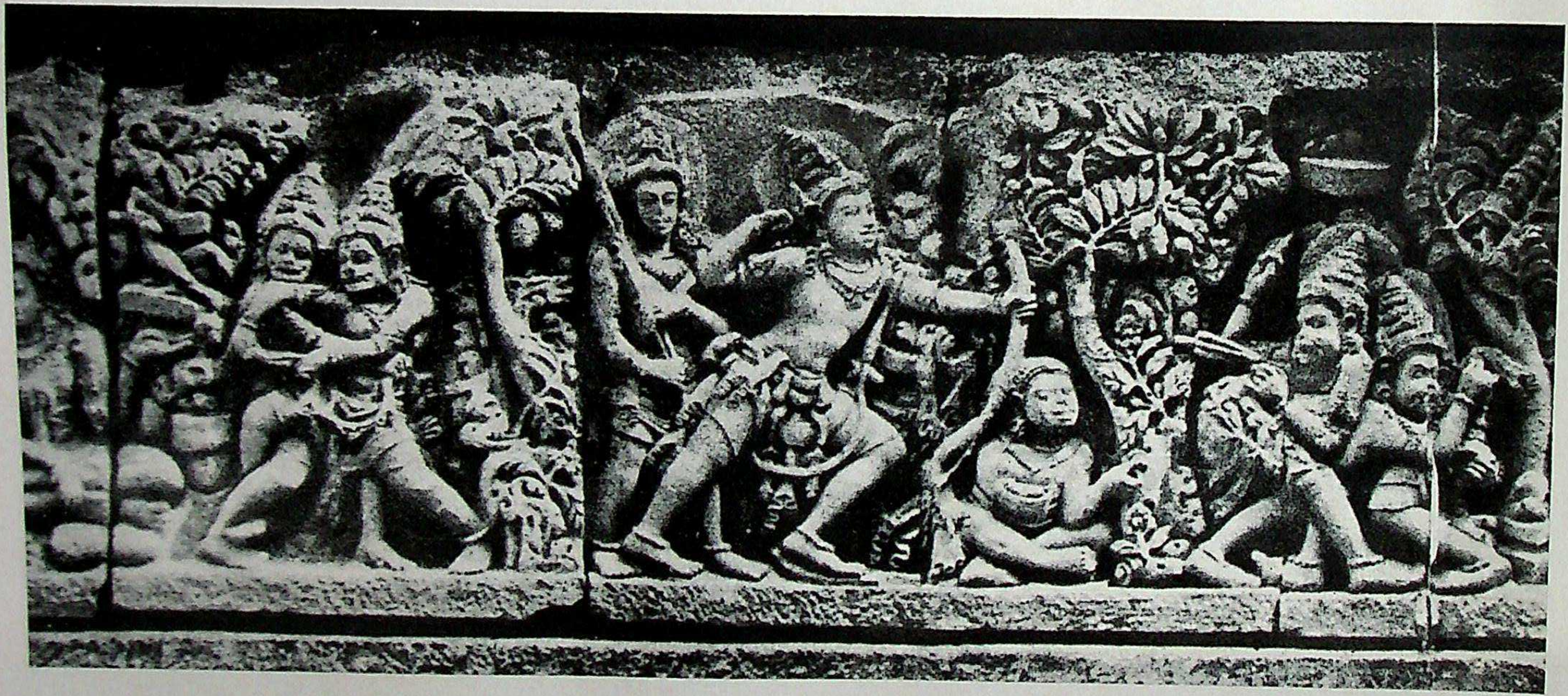

Fig. 48. Vālī-Sugrīva fight, Rāma shoots Vālī, Śailendra, 9th century, A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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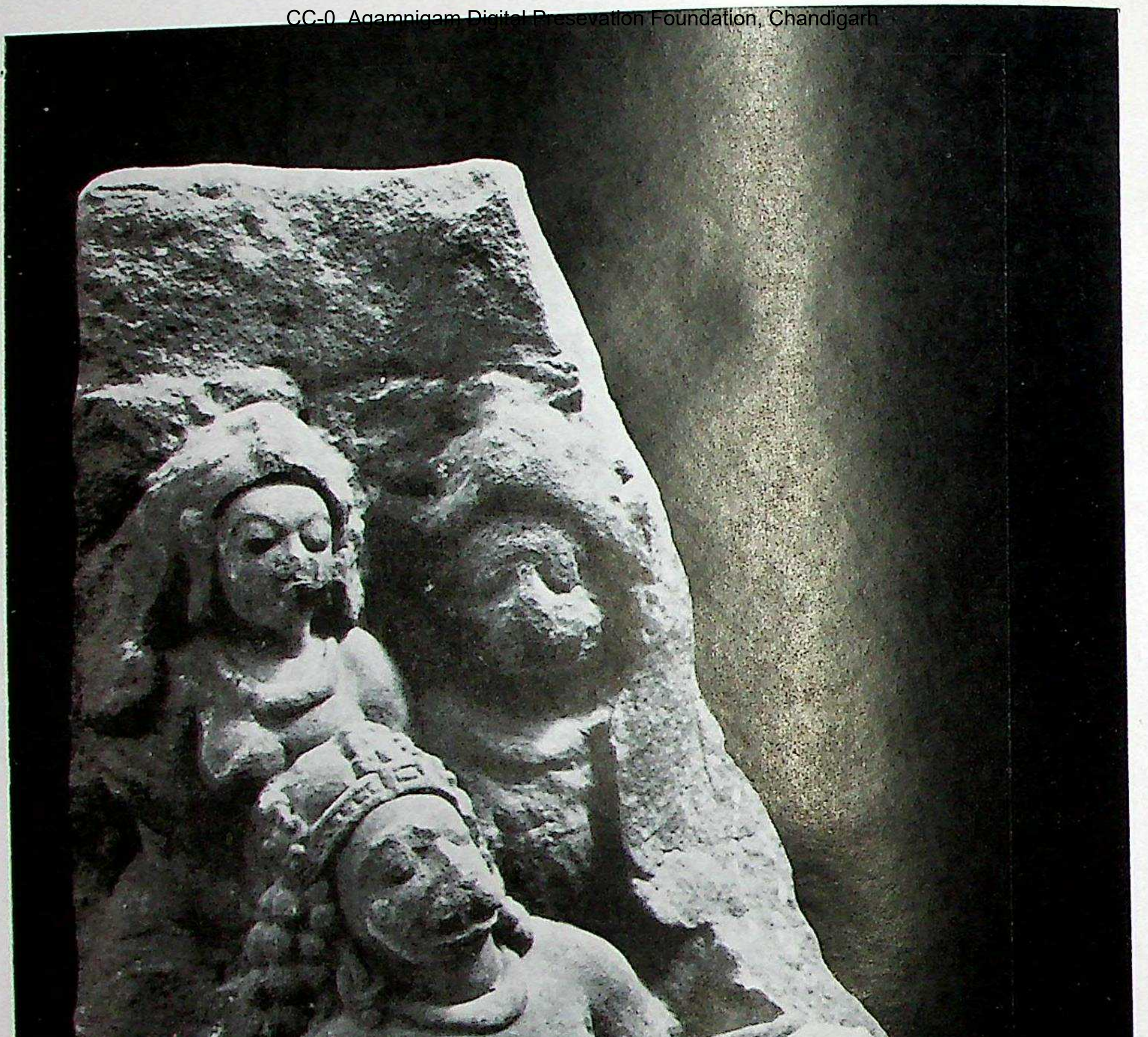

Fig. 49. Vālī, hit by arrow, falls, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Deogarh.

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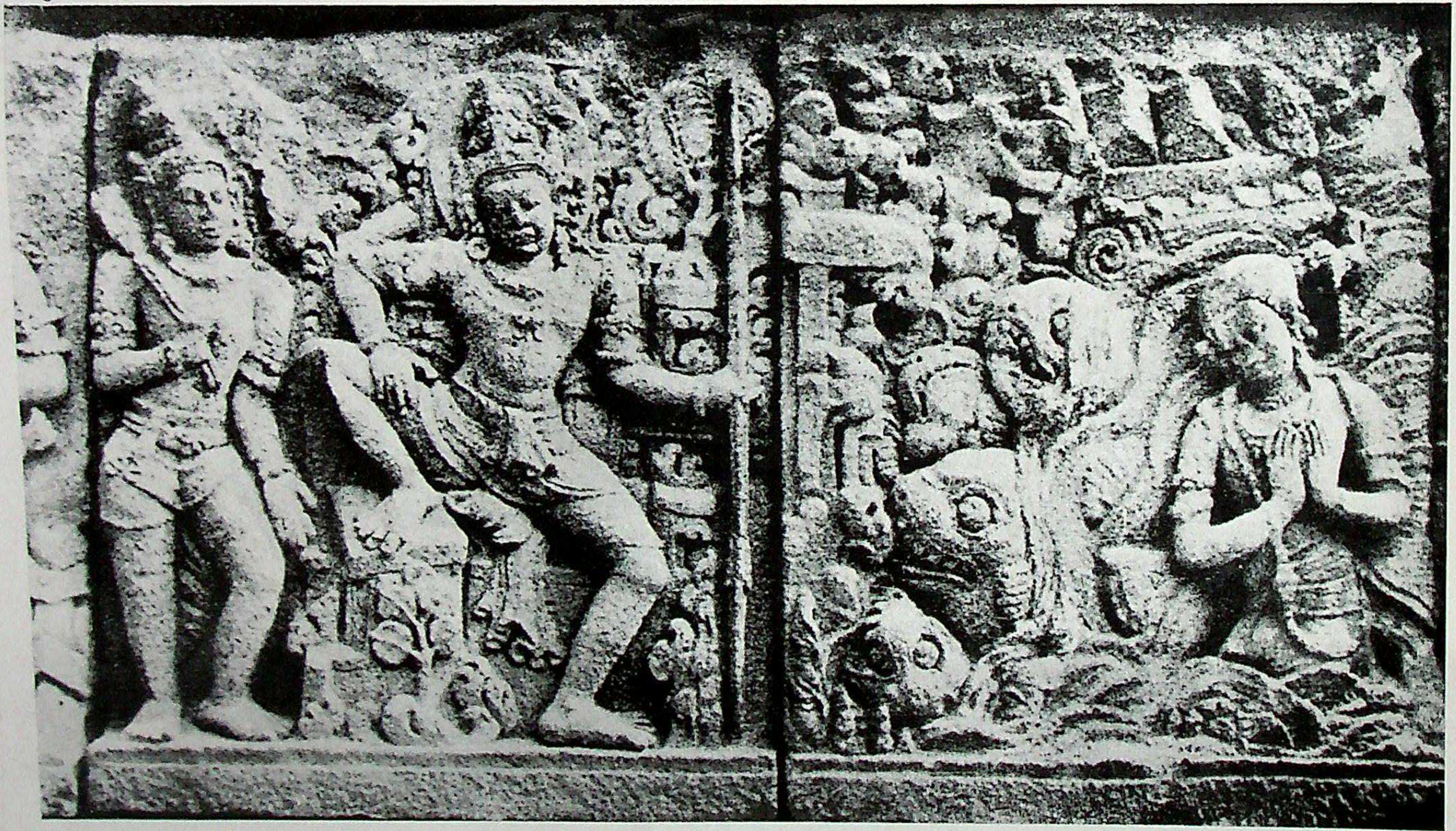

Fig. 50. Samudra addresses Rāma reverentially and convinces him of his plan of action, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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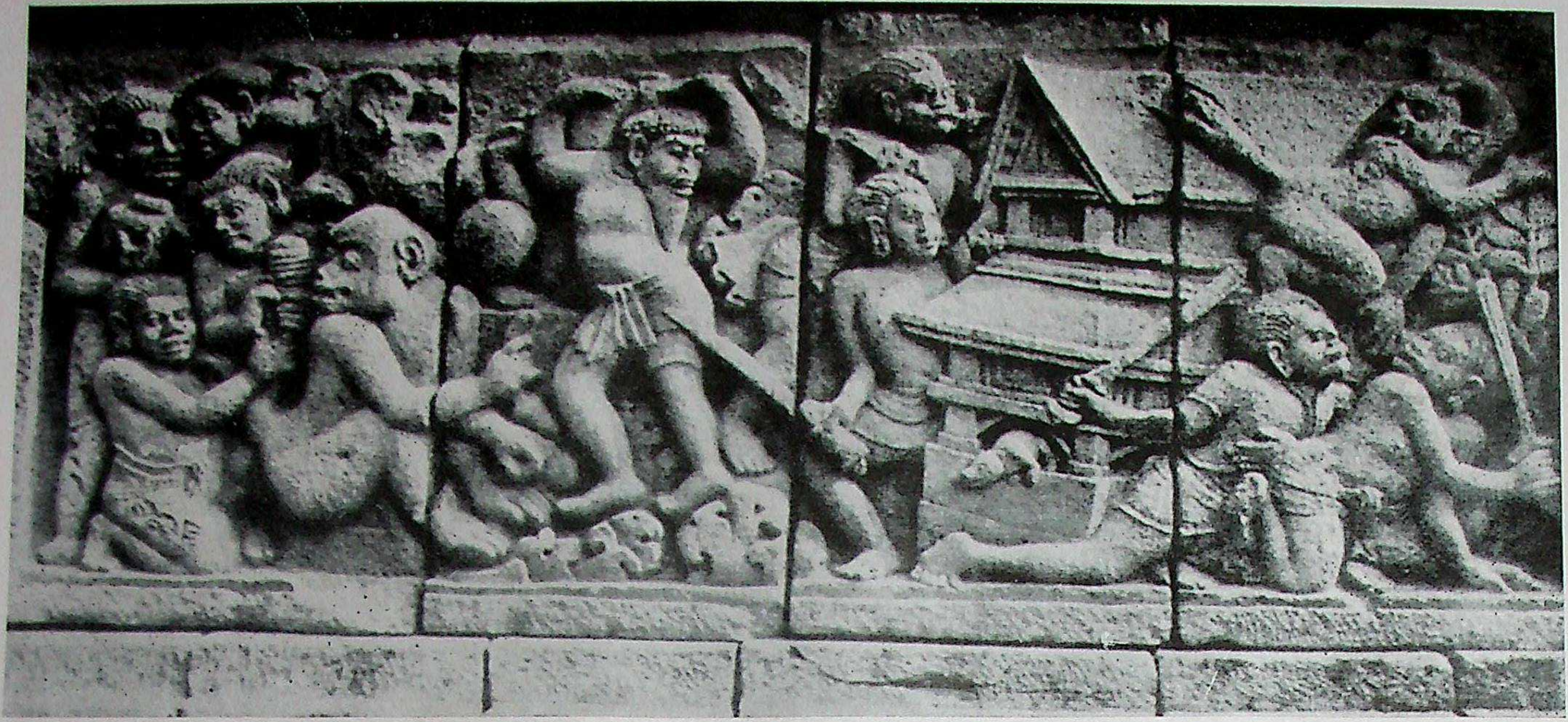

Fig. 51. Hanumān's anger blazes Laṅkā, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

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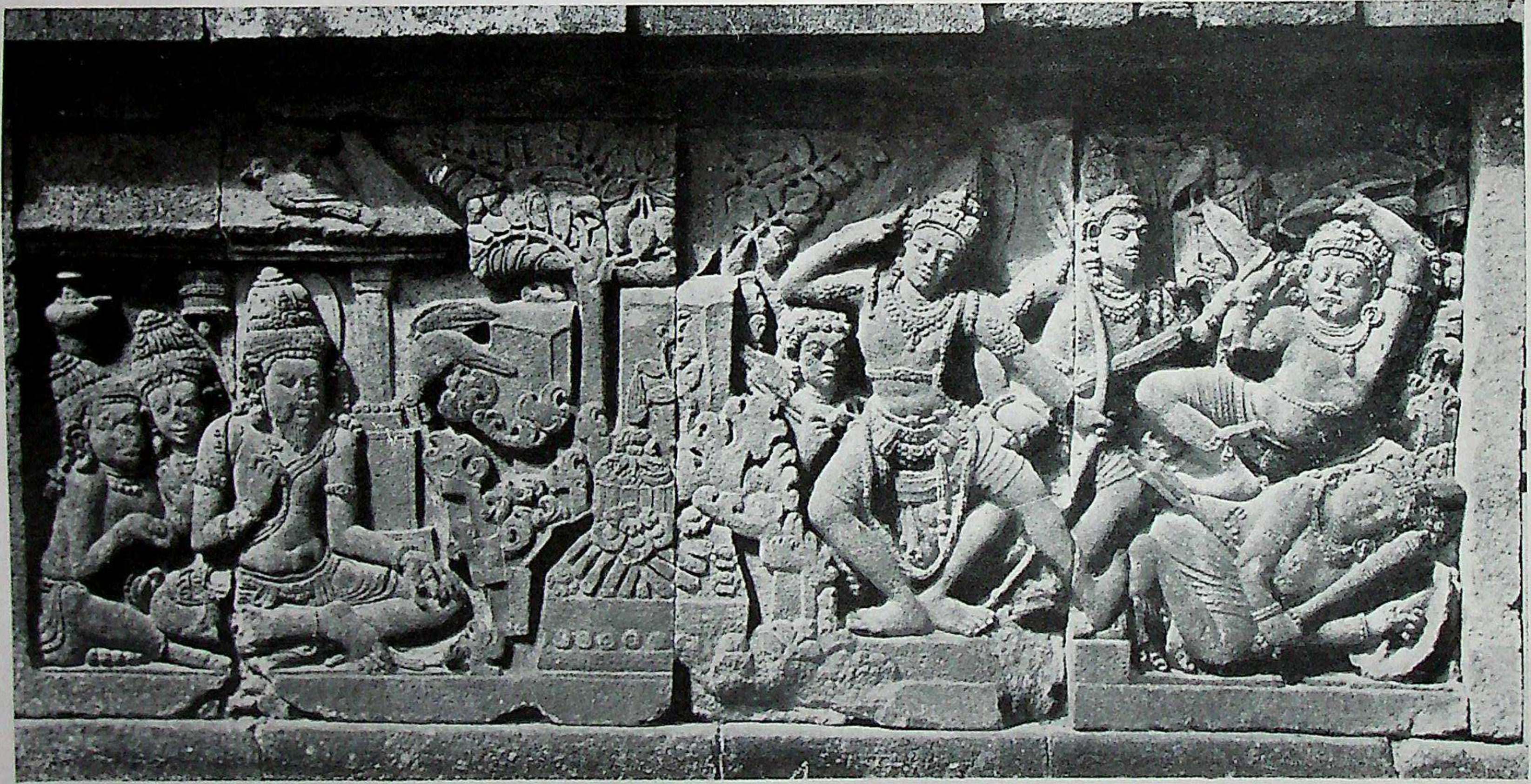

Fig. 52. Rāma kills Subāhu but spares Mārīcha in protecting Viśvāmitra's sacrifice, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanam, Indonesia.

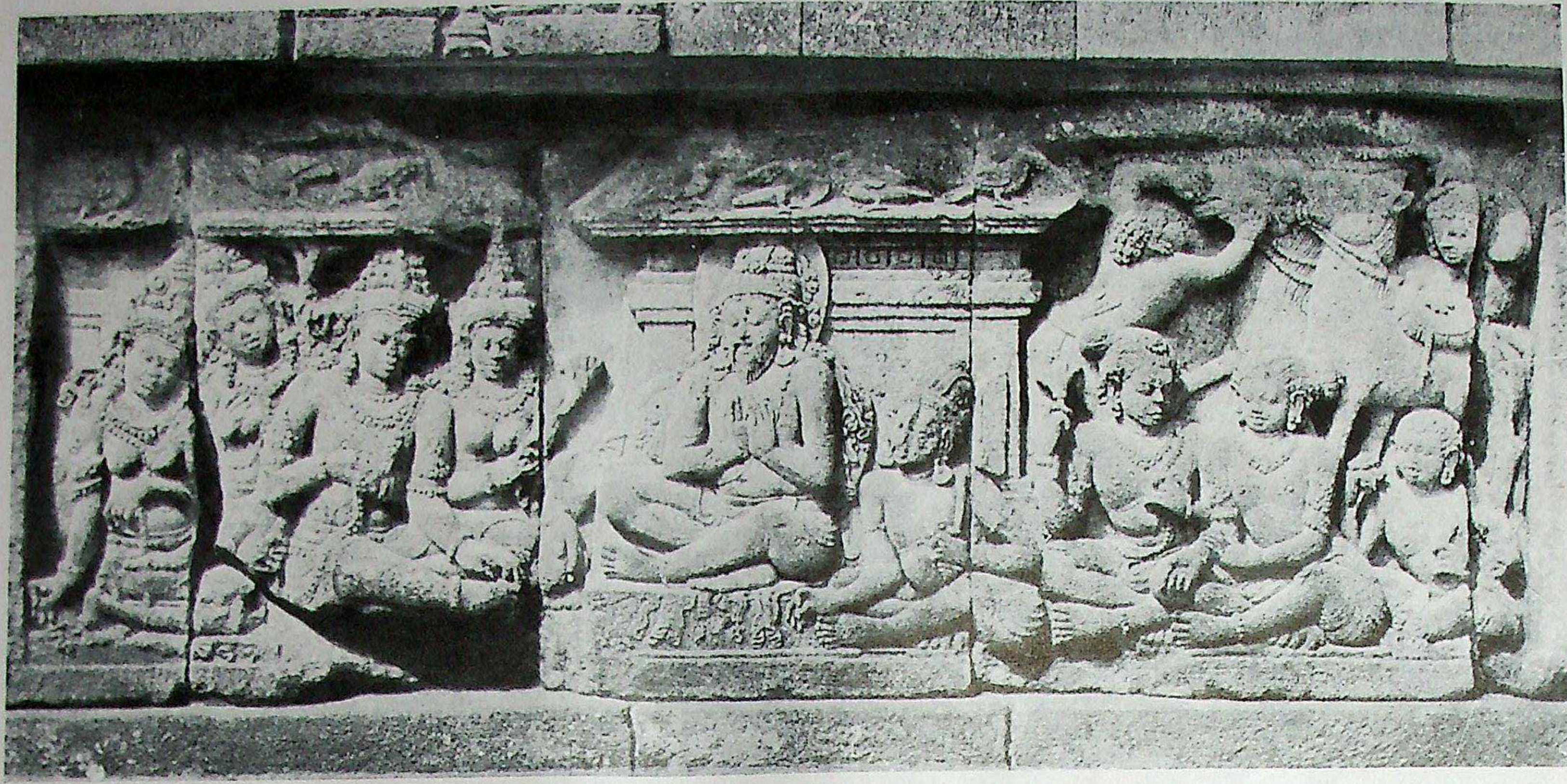

Fig. 53. Viśvāmitra assures Daśaratha in his palace of Rāma's greatness, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanan, Indonesia.

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Fig. 54. Ahalyā released from curse, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Deogarh, National Museum.

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Fig. 56. Kumāragupta's elephant-rider type of coin, the king simulating Rāma, beloved prince of Ayodhyā. Gupta, 5th century A.D.

Fig. 57. Kaikeyī refuses to listen to Mantharā speaking ill of Rāma whom she loved more than even Bharata, Basohli school, 18th century A.D., National Museum.

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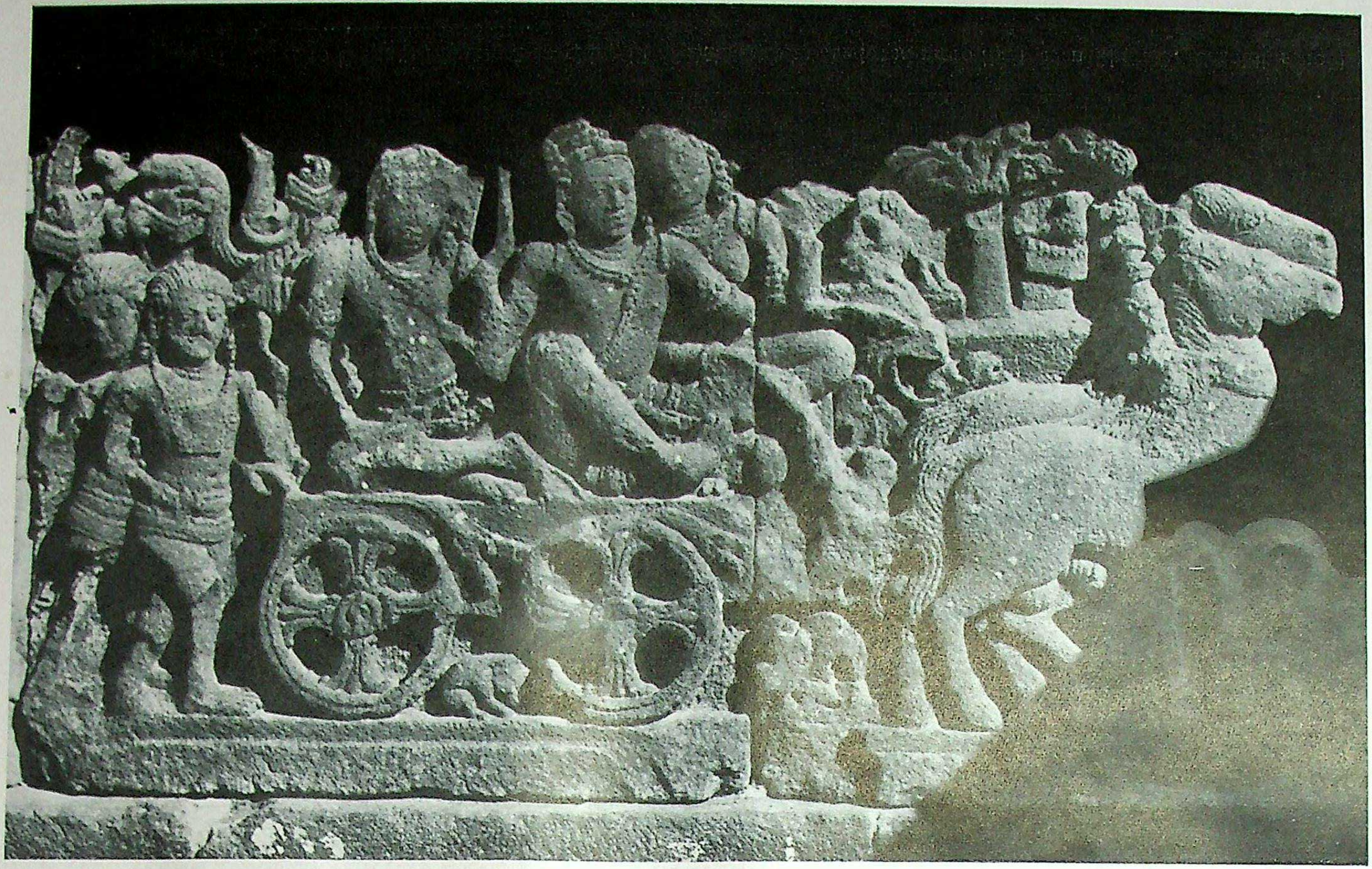

Fig. 58. The wail of the people of Ayodhyā as Rāma leaves for the forest, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanan, Indonesia.

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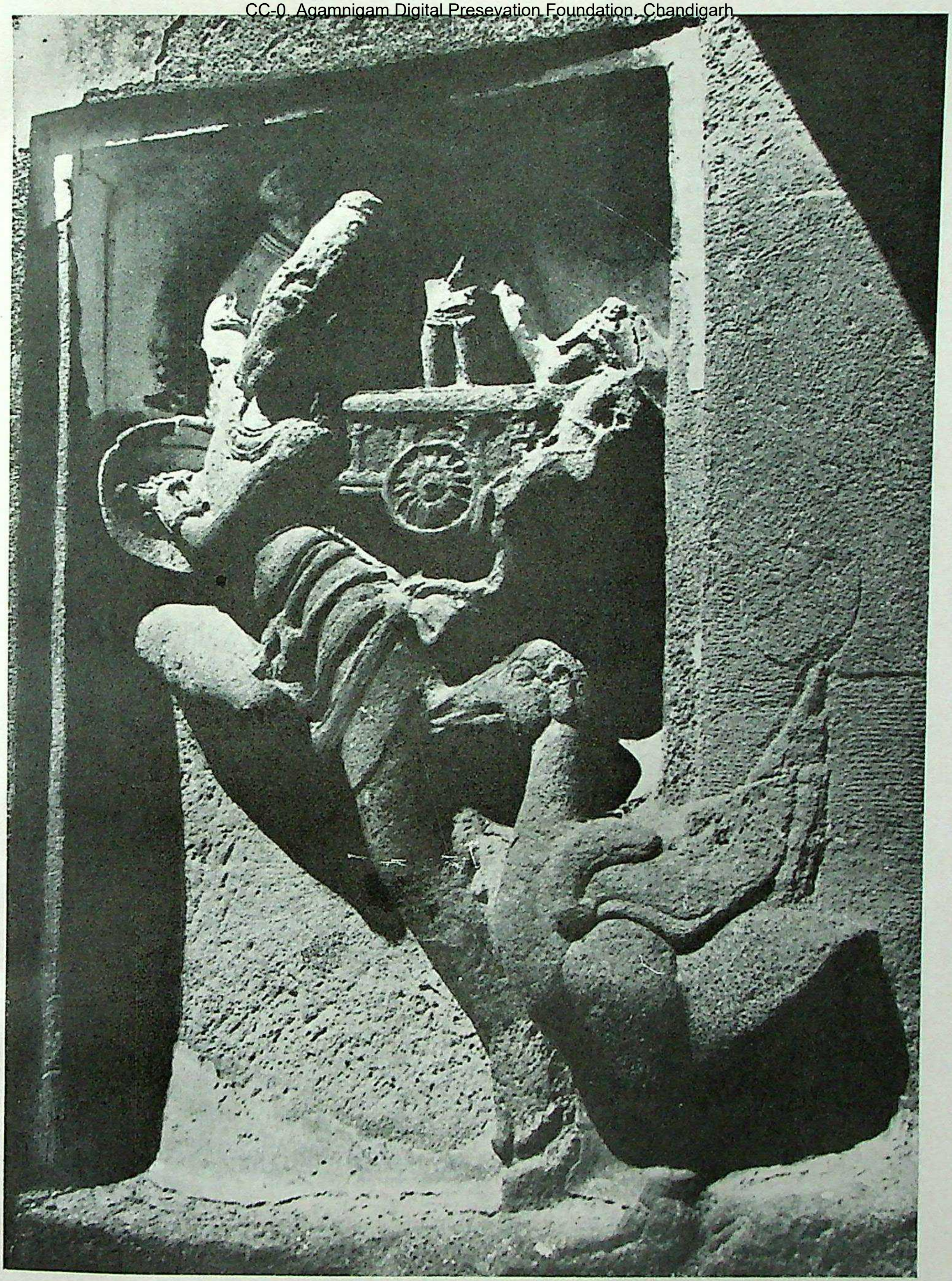

Fig. 59. Jaṭāyu fights Rāvaṇa, Rāshṭrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Kailāsa temple, Ellora.

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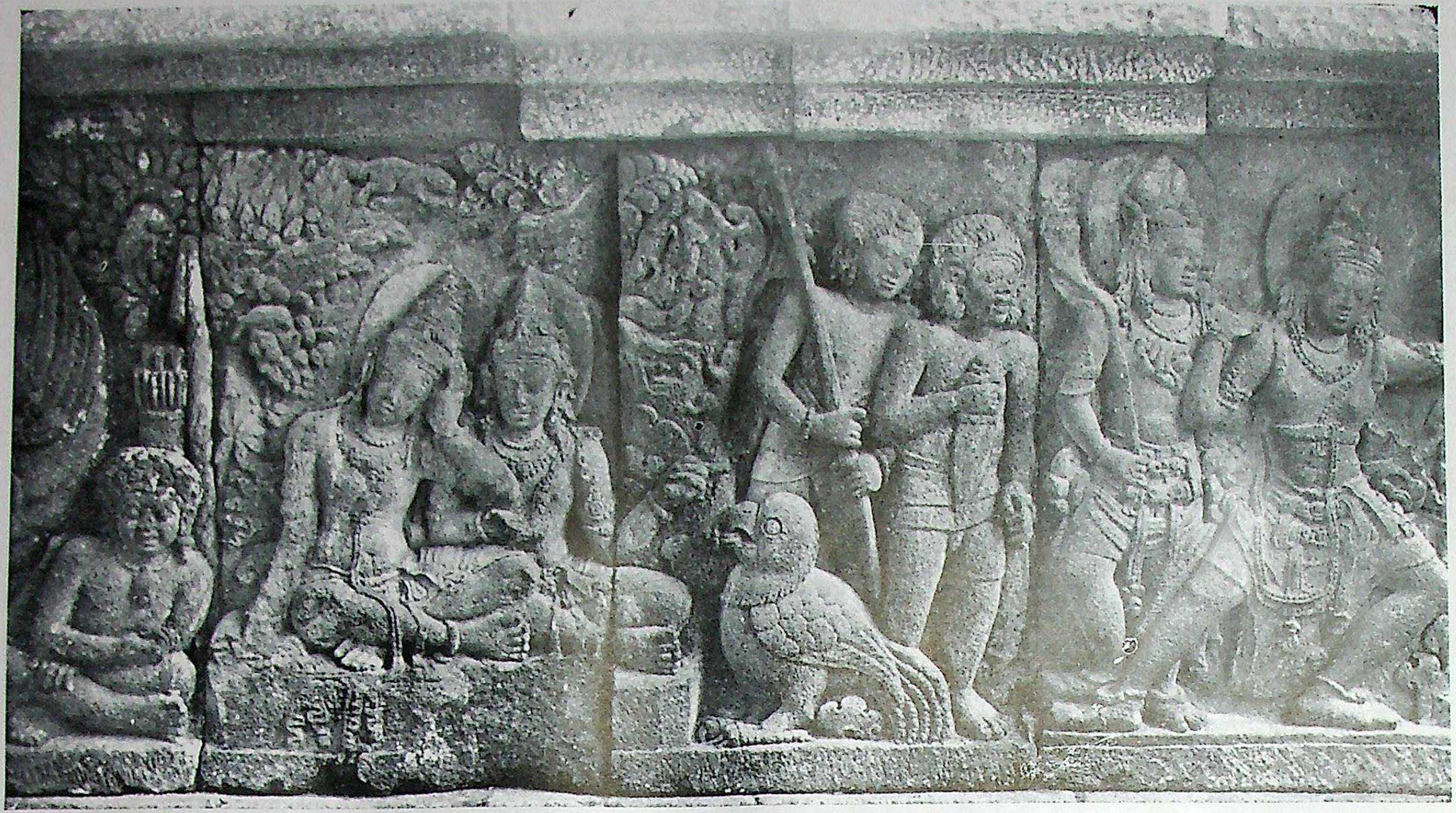

Fig. 60. Rāma and Lakshmaṇa before Jaṭāyu, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Śiva temple, Prambanan, Indonesia.

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Fig. 61. Rāma cremating Jaṭāyu, Cuḍḍapah School, 18th century A.D., Hyderabad Museum, Hyderabad.

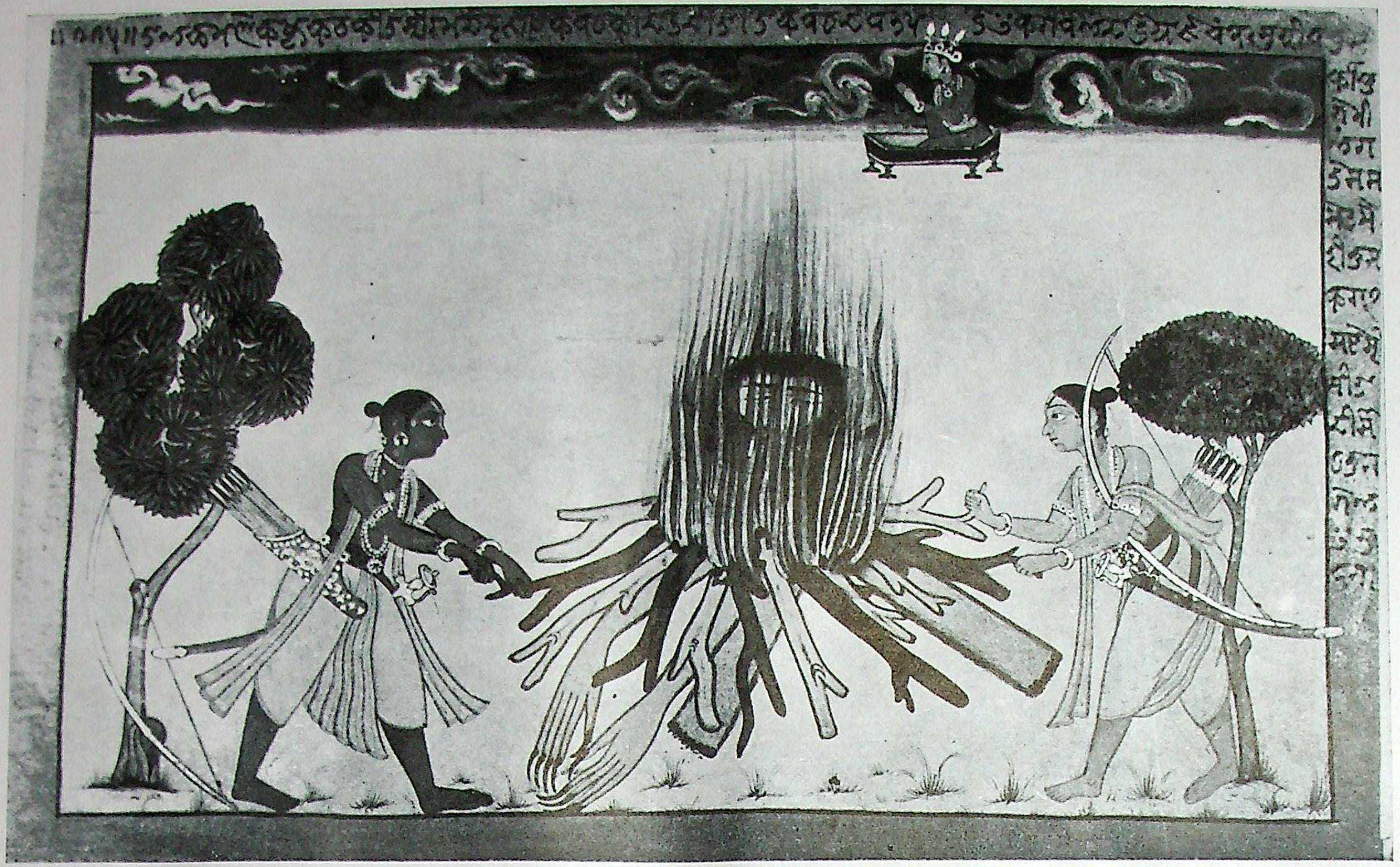

Fig. 62. Rāma cremating Kabandha, Basohli school, 18th century A.D., National Museum.

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Fig. 63. Rāma born of the efficacy of sacrifices, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Nāgeśvara-swāmi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

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Fig. 65. Rāma expounding the highest philosophy to the sages, bronze, 15th century Rajasthan, National Museum.

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Fig. 66. Rāma expounding the highest philosophy to the sages, bronze, 17th Century A.D., Kerala.

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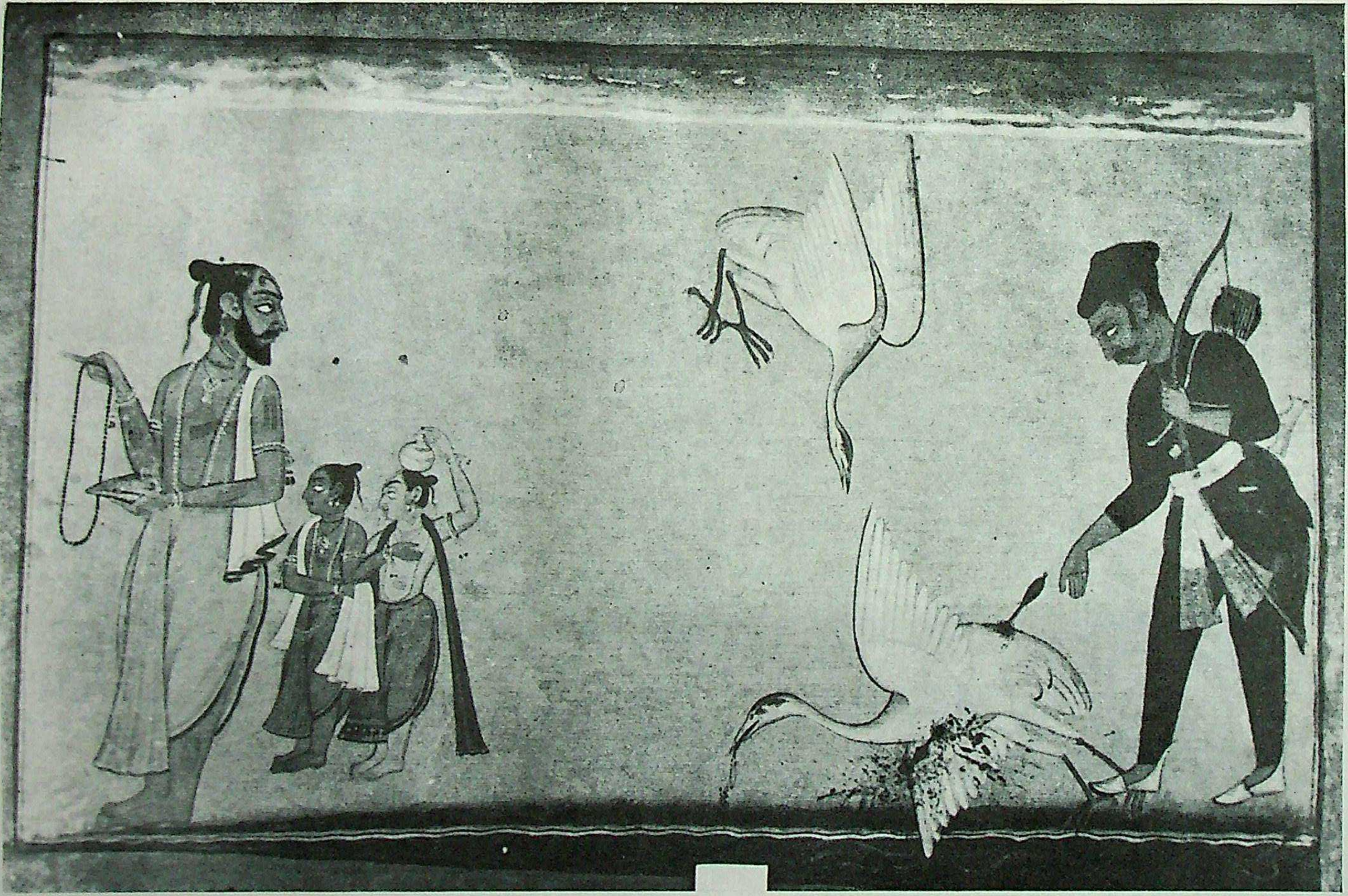

Fig. 67. The grief of Vālmīki spurts into poetry, Basohli school, 18th century A.D., National Museum.

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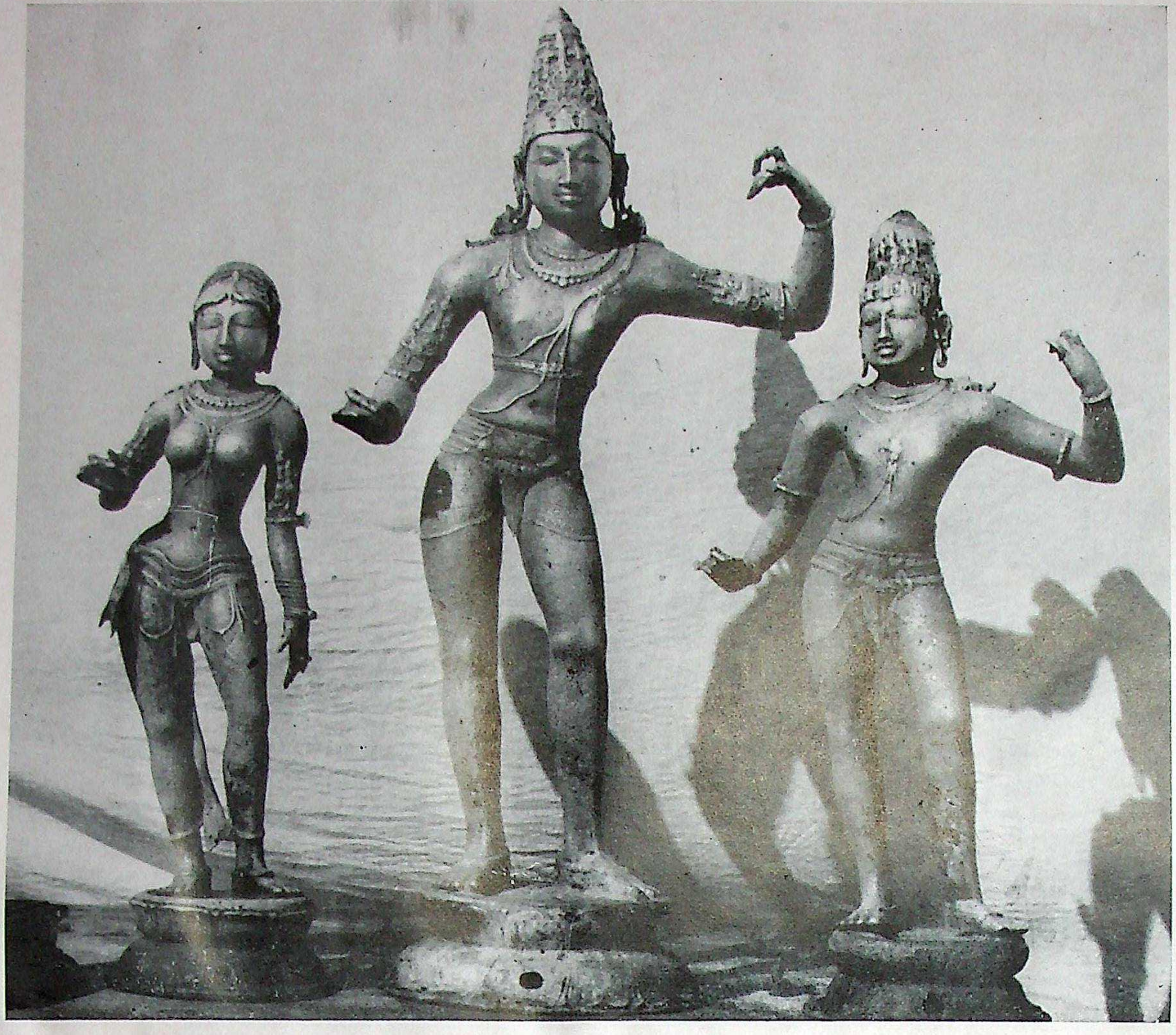

Fig. 68. Rāma, Lakshmaṇa and Sītā, Choḷa, 1000 A.D. Paruttiyur, Tañjāvur district.

Fig. 69. Rāma, Lakshmaṇa, Sītā and Hanumān, 1000 A.D. Vaḍakkupaṇayur Government Museum, Madras.

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THE AUTHOR

THE BOOK

Rāmo Vigrahavān Dharmaḥ: Rāma Embodiment of Righteousness is a theme of a series of lectures delivered by C. Sivaramamurti at the L.D. Institute of Indology at Ahmedabad. They constitute an account of the great qualities that characterise Rāma as the noblest hero who lived an ideal life and showed a rare ethical path not only to everyone in India but probably to the entire world. Rāma has been understood by different poets apart from Valmīki like Kālidāsa, Kshemendra, Bhavabhūti, Murāri, Bhaṭṭi and others in manifold ways and the story of Rāma itself has been transformed in several places in different form to suit effective delineation of the character of Rāma that has ever caught the imagination and eye of the poet, sculptor, painter and even the potter who moulded in clay beautiful terracottas of this theme.

Rāma's story has not only been unravelled all over India, but has travelled all over South East Asia and probably the sculptural narration at Prambanan in Indonesia, the most effective, and the Vālī-Sugrīva fight on the facade of Bantey Srei in Cambodia are incomparable. The book is a very interesting presentation of the highest principles for which India has always stood and the illustrations accompanying the book enliven it.

The author is of a family where devotion to Rāma is a heredity, and has lavished a critical appraisal on the noblest epical character.